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HER BROTHER'S LETTERS

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WHEREIN MISS CHRISTINE CARSON, OF CINCINNATI, IS SHOWN HOW THE AFFAIRS OF GIRLS AND WOMEN ARE REGARDED BY MEN IN GENERAL AND, IN PARTICULAR, BY HER BROTHER, LENT CARSON, LAWYER, OF NEW YORK CITY.

ANONYMOUS

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DRAWINGS BY
F. VAUX WILSON
AND
C. M. RELYEA

ROYAL

LONDON
E. GRANT RICHARDS
1907

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PRINTED BY
PREMIER PRESS, NEW YORK. U. S. A.

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LETTER NUMBER ONE

LETTER NUMBER ONE,

In Which the Brother Talks to His Sister, Who Wants to Wear Décolletée.

My Dear Kittens:

TRY hard to forgive me, Sis, when I tell you that of late your letters remind me of the old lady who said that everything she liked was either indigestible or immoral.

For instance, take your last letter; I thought long about it, for you wrote the governor had said: "Put it up to Len, and as he says so shall it be," and then you urged, "Now, *do,* you dear, good fellow, decide for me, and I shall love you eternally." And all this "eternal" love was to be given me if I said, "Why, yes; go ahead, Kittens, tell the governor he's

old-fashioned: point out to him he's behind the times: show him all the girls of your age wear low-necked gowns at swell affairs and why shouldn't you?" But, dear girl, I'm not going to do anything of the sort, and I'll tell you why.

This low-necked dress business on the part of women is getting to be more of a horror to decent men all the time, and I am not going to say any word that will bring my young sister into the ranks of the "undressed." You will say, of course, that I, too, am "old-fogyish," and that I want you to look like a "frump" among the other girls. If exposing your body (don't gasp: I'm "speakin' out in meetin'" all right and calling things by their right names, and I intend to do so) means your going to be "like the rest of the girls," then I'd rather you'd be a "frump."

You are twenty-three now, Kittens—old enough to have some very plain words said to you, and I am going to take a brother's privilege and say them whether you like them or not. You say, "All the nice girls I know wear décolletée," but is that so? Alice Dunton doesn't; neither does Ella King, nor Fannie Scott. "Yes," you will say, "but they are the exceptions. Look at the vast majority." Not "the vast majority," Sis; what you mean is the majority in the "smart set." But even in the "smart set" there are exceptions to the "undressed." I was at the opera one night, and as I looked around the "gold horseshoe" of boxes, as it is called, I couldn't help singling out one girl. Dick was with me, and he said, "Len, who is that girl in white in the third box from the centre? Isn't it Miss Foote?" And it

was Miss Foote, one of the richest girls in New York, who could buy and sell the women in the boxes on either side of her several times over and not feel it. And there she was: in a white dress (I can't, of course, describe the goods or the cut) as stunning as you please. But her dress from her bust up to her neck had a lacy sort of stuff that was as modest and sweet as could be. There was not a suggestive line about her.

During the *entr'actes* I went into her box, and when I could get a chance I paid my respects to her and had a talk with her. I say when I could get a chance, because the men were three deep about her and she had more attention in a minute than any other girl in that whole horseshoe. "For her money," you say. No, Kittens, because every man knows she has given her heart to a

certain chap, and so, matrimonially speaking, she is out of the market. It was simply because, as a man about town whom I wouldn't exactly care to have you know, and yet who, blasé as he is and almost insensible to the finer things as I thought him to be, said to me in the foyer: "By Jove, Len, it is a nice thing to see a girl like that, dressed as she is and as decent as she is, sitting in that sea of indecent exposé, isn't it?"

There you have it, Kittens, from a thorough man of the world, a man who isn't particularly careful or fine in his point of view so far as women are concerned: "indecent exposé!" And that is what it is: nothing short of it. There were young girls there in those boxes, Sis, with a cut to their bodices that, by thunder, made even a man's eyes turn away from what he could see; what

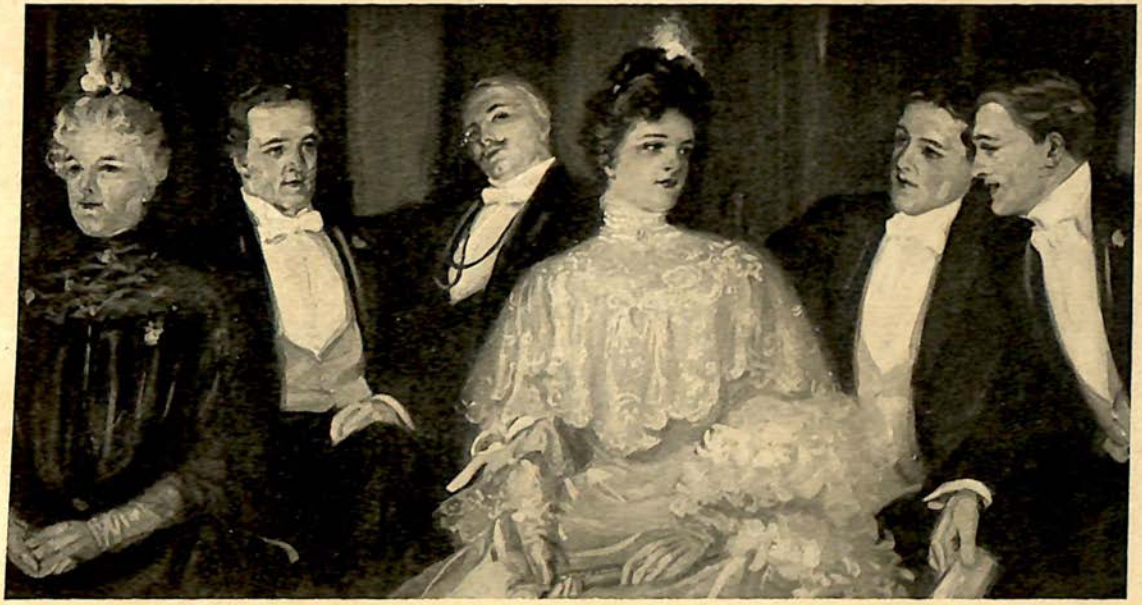
should be sacred to themselves laid absolutely bare to a public!

"Extreme," you say. Yes, extreme, but that is what that sort of thing leads to all the same. It is not a far cry, I notice, from what you women call a V-cut gown, I think, to shoulder-straps that make decent men wonder if they will hold on, and other kinds of men hope they won't. "But those men!" you say. True, but a woman in a public place cannot always control the kind of men who come and speak to her, or are brought to her. Here is a picture I saw in a paper yesterday. Of course, you flare up and say it is disgusting! But, frankly now, is it so much more disgusting than some of the displays that women make? Not so much worse than some I have seen, at any rate. We are in a very fair way of

coming to this limit. Only last week, at the theatre, I sat behind a fat woman—old enough to know better—who had on a low-cut dress, and the view from behind was, I assure you, Sis, such as no woman of even the faintest decency would be guilty of. Nell was with me, and she didn't say anything, of course, but her look spoke volumes!

And do you for a moment believe, Kittens, that this low-necked dressing arouses the highest thoughts in even the best and most decent men? Not for a minute. And yet these thoughts, the mere mention of which makes a self-respecting girl shrink, thoughts which are full of danger to the girl and not less to the man—who, pray, arouses such thoughts, who touches the match to the awakening of those senses in a man? And who does it deliberately, too? I

say "deliberately," for certainly you women do not dress for other women—you dress for men, to be admired by them, to be courted by them, to have them follow in your train. Deny it as you may and do, in your heart you know this is true. Therefore, if you dress for men, you must deliberately uncover your necks and shoulders for them. Frank talk? Yes: and I mean to be franker yet. You do this, and then when you receive a vulgar stare from a man: when a man's eyes roam below your chin you shrink from him—he's "awful!" you say. In other words, women uncover their bodies to the very verge of decency—and beyond it—they furnish themselves with every allurement to the senses conceivable, of fragrance, of texture, of everything; they stand revealed before men in this



"She Had More Attention Than Any Other Girl in That Whole Horseshoe."

way, nay, they go further, they throw themselves into their arms this way, dance with them—motion, contact, the surroundings of a heated room, the music—all adding to only one effect and result! And then—well, then what? When the sense nature is aroused in a man, and by some action or look he shows it, then the girl retreats shudderingly with disgust. And women call this virtue! They tamper with a man: play with him, and—turn from him. Nice consistency of action, forsooth!

For a while women confined these bodily allurements to the ballroom, and to affairs after lights were up. But apparently this did not suffice, and latterly the same idea has been introduced into the street and into the daylight hours, so far as it can be with that nice sense of feminine propriety that men find so

difficult to understand. The thinnest, flimsiest textures are resorted to by young girls and women for bodices until the texture that can show most plainly the billows of lace and of pink and blue ribbons underneath seems to be the most sought after. But even that did not seem to suffice. There must be introduced the "fishnet" bodice, showing "things underneath" even more plainly, more strongly: until the very limit of daring openwork design for a waist seems to have been reached. And all for what? For women? I would like to think so. And when a man's eyes wander into and through the mazes of these openwork bodices you girls shrink again. You exclaim with beautiful modesty about the immodesty of man! And yet, as I heard an actor say on the vaudeville stage the other day, "If

women don't want us to rubber why do they wear those fishnets?" Why, indeed?

But even this has not sufficed for some girls and women. Apparently it wasn't enough for the sex to wear these "inflammatory waists," as a chap I know calls them, and suggest the upper portions of the body and their underclothes. They must go further yet, and in comes the skirt that fits so tight around the hips as to show every line and curve of the lower anatomy—about as indecently suggestive an effect as a woman can reach. With this generally goes the most expensive of silk openwork stockings, with the sitting posture always so arranged as to show a goodly part of the expensive things! Every art is employed, apparently, to go just as far as a woman can go in the direc-

tion of suggestive dressing. Where is going to be the end of this sort of thing, Sis? Where is the limit? Are men all wrong in attributing the virtue of modesty to women? Hang me if it doesn't make a chap sometimes think so!

Keep away from it all, Kittens. Dress prettily, yes, as a girl should. But also dress modestly. Don't for Heaven's sake, dress either before or after six o'clock in a way that will set men thinking of other than "charms visibly seen." Anything beyond that is bad—bad for the girl and bad for the man. Believe me when I say that the décolletée, and what goes with it and from it, has no place in the wardrobe of the self-respecting, modest girl, and every man that is a man will agree with me. There is not a husband who is a husband that wants to see his wife or his daughter

uncover herself for the gaze and vulgar comment of other men. You may hear it excused: you may hear all sorts of reasons given by girls, but in the final analysis it isn't decent: it isn't nice, and every man respects the girl who shuns it, who keeps everything save her face and hands sacred.

Henry Ward Beecher summed up the whole thing in a nutshell when he said, "A proper dress for any girl or woman is one that reveals the lady but not the person."

The governor is right, Sis, and he is a man of the world: big and broad-minded, too. He has seen a few things, just a few more than either you or I, and he's a pretty good sort to tie to. Ask him if the *mater* ever showed her neck and shoulders to a collection of motley men, and I'll wager a five-pound

box of the best that Maillard makes that she didn't; and you and I know, Kittens, that the *mater* is about as good and fine as there is going. Take my word for it, the *mater* is pretty good for you to get next, and so is the governor: they're pretty well matched, those two, in good old common sense, and you'll find it out as I have. Only just now: take my word for it. Give my love to both of them and, if you haven't got it in for me too hard for all this, kiss yourself a good sound whacking kiss on those pretty lips of yours for

YOUR OLD LENT,

who loves you too hard for other chaps to see what they have no business to see, and what in after years you'll be deuced glad they didn't see!

LETTER NUMBER TWO.

LETTER NUMBER TWO,

In Which the Brother Touches on the Hysterical Adulation of Public Idols by Women.

My Dear Kittens:

YOU will be interested, I think, if not altogether pleased, at an experience I had, apropos of your last letter.

You told me in that letter about the "time of your lives" that you girls had at Music Hall the other afternoon at a recital given by ——: how his playing simply "carried you off your feet": how it "enthralled" you and made you all feel that this pianist was "simply divine." All the girls had "creeps down their spines": they were "hot and cold

all over," etc. In short, you had one of those hysterical flings that seem to appeal to girls and women at these recitals.

"Well, what of it, if we did?" you ask. Nothing, Kittens: *if* you had let it go at all that, except that I don't think this sort of thing is healthy for you, since you say yourself that you were all "as limp as wet rags after it." But never mind all that. That sort of enjoyment (!) is feminine, I suppose, and cannot be understood by a man. But then you say that you girls, at the close of the recital, crowded around the stage and just buried this artist with your corsage bouquets, waylaid him as he came out of the stage door, threw violets at him, and "fairly surrounded him until he had to fight his way through us to his carriage." And you say: "He was

tickled to pieces, and smiled and smiled and waved his hand and took off his hat again and again," etc. That is, you *thought* he felt "tickled." You retort, "I *know* he did."

But I am going to give you a side of that picture that you don't expect.

Now I happen to know this idol of yours. I met him two years ago, got to know him pretty well, and day before yesterday I spent an hour with him, and yesterday the best part of the afternoon. Coincidence, wasn't it? Well, not exactly, for I put myself into the way of it —for a purpose; although, I confess, I didn't expect to hear and experience what I did.

Except for a recital in Philadelphia he had come direct from the one at which you heard him in Cincinnati to New York. So, during our chat, I turned

the talk to his work, and finally led the conversation to his recital at Cincinnati.

"The women there gave you the usual appreciative reception that we read about, I suppose?" I asked him with a smile.

But *he* didn't smile, Sis, for your idol is a much more sensible, manly chap than you girls think he is.

"Well, Mr. Carson," he replied, "my experience in Cincinnati was unfortunately too much like my experience in other cities."

"How 'unfortunate'?" I asked.

"Well, sir," replied he, looking at me in a serious way, "I cannot help wishing that your American girls—and their mothers, too, I may say—had a little more—what do you call it——?"

"Restraint?" I filled in.

"Yes, decidedly," he said; "restraint:

self-poise I should call it, perhaps. I can't believe," continued this man who, you say, was so "tickled" with you girls, "that this hysteria with which they favor" (here there was a sickly smile) "me and other performers is good for these girls physically. In fact, I know it is not. Not only that, but, if you will excuse me for saying so, it does not seem to be womanly. It is certainly not in good taste."

Very much "tickled," wasn't he? But wait:

"Of course," he said, "I must appear pleased and appreciative: it is part of my business: my bread and butter, yes! And since these women mean well I must accept their tribute in spirit. But I do not like it: it makes me sad in a way. I was always taught to believe in a woman as something modest and hav-

ing a certain dignity: one who has herself well in hand—appreciative of an honest effort, yes, but not foolish! And it is foolish: this throwing of flowers and such things. It does not 'go' with a man, you know. It makes a fool of him, too. And I never know what to do with these flowers" (there came that sickly smile again) "that they tear from their dresses and throw at me. Of course, I must pick them up, but I do not like their odor in a room."

"What do you do with them?"

"Ah," he said, "I tell my manager to send them to the sick, and I hope he does it. But I must say that I have caught him more than once throwing them out of the window or giving them to the chambermaids."

A little different from what you thought, Sis. But there is more.

"Mr. Carson," he exclaimed, "tell me: why do your American girls do these unheard-of things — unheard of, because the girls of other countries do not do them? They come to my concerts: they seem to enjoy them: they applaud me when I do well, and then they go home as well-ordered people should. That is what I like: that's what makes a man's opinion of women higher.

"But this other sort of thing," he went on, "it is not gracious in a girl: it does not belong to her. I want to think well of American girls and women, for they have been very generous to me, and made many things possible for me and mine at home. But, just stop and think, Mr. Carson, what I see as I go from city to city in your country: think how hard it is for me, as a foreigner, to believe

that your American girls are nice: that they are all they should be.

"They mean well, I do not doubt," he added, "but is that the most I should be able to say of the American girl: that she means well?

"Mr. Carson," he said suddenly before I could answer, "I should like very much to have you come to my recital tomorrow afternoon and see for yourself."

I hesitated a moment, Sis, for you know I'm not given to these afternoon "hen affairs." Still, it was Saturday, with no court, and I agreed.

So yesterday I went to the recital with your idol, and for two hours I sat there and nothing happened. When he had played his last number, however, there was a movement toward the stage, and when he came out again the women

were packed around that stage fifty deep. I never saw such jostling and pushing. Twice, thrice, he came out and bowed, and then he played again. This went on for three encores, and then began the throwing of corsage bouquets the like of which I never saw before. A fourth encore, and as he finished he beckoned to me in the box and I went "behind."

"I am going home," he said briefly. "Will you come with me and walk ahead to the carriage?"

"Walk ahead?" I asked. But just then I opened the stage door leading to the street and I saw what he meant. There stood a surging mass of at least a thousand girls and women, and a crazier and more tense set of faces I never saw before and hope never to see again.

"Here he comes!" came from a hundred of these women at once, and in a moment I found myself in a whirl of women actually fighting my way to the curb, with your idol keeping close behind me.

I never was so disgusted with womanhood in my life. They closed in on us: the feminine proximity was absolutely offensive: women's faces were thrust into our own, hands were laid on us, and such pushing and shoving I never experienced. At last I reached the carriage, pulled open the door and jumped in. Your poor idol was still some twenty-five feet from me in the midst of a frenzied femininity that was about as disgusting as anything I had ever seen. Once or twice I saw him duck his head 'way down into the front of his coat in a way I couldn't understand. Finally

"Such Pushing and Shoving I Have Never Experienced. Your Idol, Poor Chap, Had His Hat Smashed."

he reached the carriage, and we went off pulling ourselves together. Your idol, poor chap, had his hat smashed: his necktie was askew: his coat-pockets were torn, and when he reached for his handkerchief he found it gone! Souvenir, I suppose! Some woman had deliberately taken that handkerchief out of his pocket!

I was mad clean through. Your idol looked at me, smiled and said nothing until we reached his hotel and had lighted our cigars; then he turned to me and said:

"Well, Mr. Carson?"

"There's only one word that describes it," I said, "and that is, 'indecent.' "

"It strikes you that way, then?"

"It certainly does," I answered. "Do you mean to say that this is what you go through all the time?" I asked.

"In a greater or less degree," he replied calmly, and then, with a sickly smile, he added, "At least, only three women this afternoon tried to kiss me."

"What?" I cried in astonishment, almost jumping out of my chair. Then a light dawned on me, and I asked: "Is that why you ducked your head?"

"That's why I ducked my head, as you call it," he said.

"My God!" I said. It was the only thing I could think of. "Our American women carry it as far as that!"

"They do," he said, and then he looked at me seriously and said: "Mr. Carson, this is what I mean. I do not mind these ravings so much that you saw at the close of my concert. At least, the stage separates us. But it is this stage-door frenzy: when these girls and women come so close to me: when they

lay hold of me; when they try to put their hands on my shoulders and try to kiss me: then—well, then, Mr. Carson, I will not say more, but as a man I think you will understand what I mean. It is to me disgusting: it goes over the line of woman's modesty and passes over the line of a man's self-respect.

"Forgive me," he added, "if I am too severe on your women. But you have seen now for yourself, and then that is not all. Here," he added, "what must a man think when he receives such a letter as this?"

He picked up a scented note from the table and handed it to me. Eight pages of rhapsody were there—silly, foolish rhapsody, and at the close this sentence:

"Will you let me come to you, see you, and try and tell you all that your divine gift has done for me: lifted me out of

myself: made me anew as it were? I owe my new state to you: to your divine art, and I feel as if I could lay my life, my whole being, my soul, my all at your feet!"

"What do you do with such a note?"

"Do with it?" he repeated. "What can a man do with it except to destroy it?"

"Nothing," I said, "except you might do as William Dean Howells did once when he received a note from a rhapsodical young woman telling him how poetry seemed to be surging within her and yet she could not express herself, and asked what she should do. And he sat down and wrote her this answer:

"'*My Dear Young Lady:*

"'I would strongly urge you to ask your mother to give you a good dose of sulphur and molasses.'

"But, seriously," I continued, "this sort of a note is exceptional, is it not?"

"Exceptional!" he repeated. "I wish it were."

Surely, Kittens, you girls are carrying this hysteria business pretty far. It makes a man ask himself: "Is this what music is doing for the American girl?" For, as this artist well said to me as I left him:

"I tell you, Mr. Carson, this is degrading to my art. It is not a tribute, but an offense, for whatever we may think of music it is not a language of hysterics."

Nice thing, isn't it, Sis, when an artist, such as this man unquestionably is, can only say of the American girl's actions that they are degrading to his art!

I leave you to think of all this when next you go to a recital.

As ever, with love all around.

LENT.

LETTER NUMBER THREE.

LETTER NUMBER THREE,

In Which the Brother Talks to His Sister About Never Marrying a Man Until She's Got Another Man's Honest Opinion of Him.

My Dear Vicious Kittens:

CHRISTMAS, but you scratch hard, Sis! I feel as if I haven't a hair left on my head, and all because I didn't tell you what happened between Nell and me while she was here in New York. But how could I? A man can't very well, even to his sister, say anything about the private affairs of a girl, unless the girl lifts the bars herself, can he? Now that Nell says I can tell you all about it I'm willing, although at first I couldn't for the life of

me see why she didn't tell you herself. To-day she writes me that she feels too badly about the whole thing to tell even you, her closest friend, and she says to me: "You tell her, Lent: you're a man and her brother."

After all, it wasn't so tremendous, although, of course, to Nell it meant a lot. You knew, naturally, that Nell was engaged to Bert Cox, and came on here with Aunt Lena to buy her wedding things. The evening she arrived I called on her, as she wired me, to give her some points about the city and the shops. The next day she started out, and it was agreed that I was to dine with them that evening.

Well, after dinner the talk, of course, led to her engagement and approaching marriage. She was naturally full of it and Bert's name came up frequently.

At one point she said something about Bert—I forget now exactly what it was —and I must have been fool enough to let a look get into my face which Nell saw. Instantly she said to me:

"Lent, why do you look that way?"

"What way?" I asked, innocently enough.

"I don't know," she said, "but I've had the notion two or three times that you do not altogether approve of Bert. Why is it? Tell me."

Well, Sis, I fenced and dodged and ducked until all of a sudden Nell got up, picked up a hassock, threw it before me, squatted down on it, and putting her two elbows on my knees and her pretty face between her hands, said:

"Look here, Lent. You know me better than any man in the world does, better even than Bert. Kittens and I are

like sisters. You are more like my brother than any fellow in the world. Now, I'm alone in the world: I haven't a father or a mother to go to, and you've got to be frank with me, Lent—real frank, understand?"

"What about?" I asked her, although I knew mighty well what was coming, and I saw that Aunt Lena did, too.

"About Bert," she said, and I saw it cost her a wrench to say it. "I heard you tell Kittens once that a girl should never marry a man, or even engage herself to him, until she got another man's opinion of him. Now," taking both my hands, "will you answer me one question square and fair?"

"Fire away," I replied.

"All right," she said. "Now, talk to me as if I were Kittens and she were going to marry Bert Cox. Do you

"You've Got to Be Frank With Me, Lent."

know, as a man, any reason why I shouldn't marry him?"

"I do, Nell," I answered.

It was tough, Kittens, and I knew it would be, but I made up my mind I wouldn't mince matters. I never heard a girl cry so in my life; she threw herself on her arms and wept and wept until I thought I'd have to start in myself. Aunt Lena threw her arms around her and tried her best to comfort her, but it was no use. Nell grew positively hysterical. I lifted her on the couch, and dear, good Aunt Lena, brick that she is, worked over her for an hour or more. I wanted to send for a doctor friend of mine, but Aunt Lena said no; she'd be all right soon. It was nearly eleven before she quieted down, and then she suddenly pulled herself together, got up, threw her arms around my neck

until she nearly rammed my back collar-button into my flesh, and cried some more. I guess she kept it up for another half hour; then she quieted down, looked into my eyes and said:

"Forgive me, Lent. I've given you a miserable evening of it, but I couldn't help it," and off she went again.

I left her, and promised I'd run around in the morning. I did, and found she'd had a night of it, and looked it, and so did poor Aunt Lena. But Nell was game, and asked if I could come to her the next day for a good long talk. I told her I would, but I felt that Bert should be there. So I telegraphed him to come on at once.

The next afternoon Bert appeared, and in the evening Aunt Lena, Nell, Bert and I had a pow-wow, and I don't want another one like it for a long time.

I started off by asking Nell to tell Bert what had happened two evenings before, how the question had come up, and where we had left it, with simply my answer to the question and no details given; that I had preferred to have Bert present when I went into details.

Then my turn came, and I started right in by looking Bert square in the eye and saying that I didn't think he was a decent enough fellow to marry Nell. Of course, Bert jumped, in fact he jumped several times during the evening, but his jumping doesn't go for much.

I gave my reasons for saying what I did. Nell asked me to be frank, and I was frank—brutally frank, perhaps. But after each reason I "rested my case," as we lawyers say, for Bert to get in his defense. He made a show of

it, of course, but, thunder, he knew mighty well he couldn't make good, and he didn't. There was a lot of bluster and all that, but he didn't meet the facts, and Nell knew it. He wasn't even as "sporty" as I thought he'd be, Kittens, for when a man is up against a thing of that sort there's only one thing to do, to my way of thinking: to acknowledge the corn and be open about it. But Bert didn't do that: he denied this and denied that, and yet he couldn't back up his denials.

After a while, seeing that merely telling me I was a liar, and letting it go at that, didn't work with Nell, he took the usual tack that fellows of his stripe take: that all men sow their wild oats, that he had sown his and was over with them: that I had myself (I made him take that back, all right, before he got through),

and that he didn't know a young fellow who hadn't, etc. I expected this argument, and I saw Nell was questioning in her mind whether this wasn't so, for, I suppose, she, like all girls, had heard that this wild-oats business is common to all men; that a girl must accept a man upon that condition, and all that.

I told Nell that this was all tommy-rot, and Aunt Lena with her experience as a mother-confessor with men and her own five sons came in here like a load of bricks, and Bert soon saw that this plausible argument, for once, wouldn't work with Nell, although it does so often go with girls, worse luck!

"However, Bert," I said, "I'll grant that your cowardly arguments are all so: I'll grant you this wild-oats business is common to you, to myself even, and to every man before he meets the girl he

wants to make his wife. All that is granted. But how about your wild oats since you met Nell, courted her, and even since you've been engaged?"

Of course, Sis, I had purposely kept this back as my last shot, and it hit all right: ye gods, how it hit! Nell fairly shot out of her chair, and I never saw a girl's eyes blaze as did hers as she fairly flew over to Bert.

"Deny that, Bert; deny it, I say!" she fairly screamed, "and prove it, prove it on your word as a man, if you are one, or leave this room instantly. Which is it?"

Talk about a melodrama! There was one, and not in a theatre, either. I never saw a girl so good an actress without trying to be one: Mrs. Leslie Carter wasn't in it with Nell, Sis.

" Bert grew as white as his shirt. He

saw that he was dealing with a woman full-grown in an instant. Nell fairly towered over him while he slunk in his chair. For the first time I felt a pity for the wretch. But that feeling was all over in a minute when, like the coward that he is, he got up, pulled himself together, and trying his best to be manly, struck a most ridiculous attitude, and revealed himself beautifully in his own words:

"Oh, you're a lot of damned idiots! I don't intend to be insulted any longer. Go to the devil, all of you!"

Well, Sis, it was lucky I didn't get where I made for, and I shall always thank Aunt Lena for it. She was too quick for me, yet I thought I was a bit quick. But it was better so. He's too dirty for a chap to lay his hands on. He got out all right. Couldn't find time

to close the door even or to grab his coat, which I had to send after him. But it was over: that was the main point. I saw that much, thank the Lord, and let it go at that. Then I stayed with Nell and Aunt Lena until 3 A. M., took a room in the hotel, slept until 11 and missed court. Still, I don't know but I'd miss court again for the same reason!

There you have it, Kittens, practically the whole thing as it happened, and what isn't written is between the lines, where you can find and read it, I guess.

The women stayed here a week at my earnest request, and I gave them a round of the theatres with the liveliest plays that the town held, spent Saturday and Sunday with them all day, and Nell was a little more like her own self when I left them in their compartment

on the train. She took me a bit back, though, that last minute when she fairly grabbed my face between her hands, and I don't think there was a part of my handsome (!) physiognomy she didn't fairly rain with kisses, dear old girl! I only wish I loved her and she loved me, so that we could end up as the books would! But she'll strike the right chap yet. She's only twenty-three, isn't she, and with that face and those eyes, there is many a good chap that would climb up the side of the Flatiron Building for her—and she'd be worth it, too. Of course, she broke down when she got home, and the *mater* was, as usual, all wool and a yard wide for taking her in. Tell her so for me, and tell her to keep Nell with you all for a few weeks at least. It will do her good to see all she can of the *mater* and the governor, for

she might get it into her bully little head now that "all men are gay deceivers," and that would be as great a pity as it is a wrong. There are a lot of chaps in this world who believe with Kipling when he says, "There are some things that a fellow won't do"—chaps who live by the rule of cleanliness and along decent lines. There's the other kind, of course, and there may be many of them, but they don't represent the whole sex.

This whole experience simply makes me feel the more strongly what you know I have always held and what led to all this about Nell: that a girl should never marry a fellow until she's got another man's honest opinion of him. She can always get such an opinion, Kittens, even where she has no father or brother. There's always a straight chap somewhere around whom a girl

can go to, and that sort of man will never refuse to be honest with such a girl if she will be honest with him—and if she will heed what he says when he puts the facts before her and not go off on that silly tangent of reforming a man after marriage! If a girl likes to play the role of a martyr—and that sort of thing seems to appeal to a lot of girls—it's about the surest way to a perfect hell on earth (forgive me, Sis, but that's the only word) that she can find!

And now for a calm pipeful to settle my nerves. It's stirred me all up just to write about it, but I knew you wouldn't be satisfied with anything except the whole story. And here it is, for a fact. A whole oceanful of love for the folks and you, and a shake for Nell from

Your old meddler of a brother,

LENT.

Just a word I nearly forgot: Don't, for a minute, believe that because Ned has come to the house several times since Nell has been there that "it looks like something." Like nothing—in that direction, at any rate. Now, for Heaven's sake, don't you put that notion into Nell's head, for I happen to know better—there's some one else so far as Ned is concerned, and I'll tell you about it when the right time comes. Meanwhile, you keep mum, Kittens, be as mum as a clam—but don't be one!

LETTER NUMBER FOUR.

LETTER NUMBER FOUR,

In Which the Brother Talks to His Sister About Her Wish to Read a Paper Before a Woman's Club.

Dear Old Kittens:

IT WAS very decent of you, Sis, to send me your "paper" on "The Golden Age of Woman" which you are asked to read before the Woman's Club next week. I took it right up last evening when it came.

You say you were provoked at the governor because, after he read it, he merely said, "Send it to Len," and that the *mater,* after she had looked it over, remarked: "I think your father is right, dear. Let us see what Len has to say about it. He's more in the world than

your father and I are, and he can tell you much better." Dear old sneaky souls! They knew, all right, Sis. They didn't want to hurt your feelings, old girl, and politely left it for me to do!

For, Kittens, dear, take my advice and don't read that paper to the Woman's Club or any other club—and I'll tell you why.

First of all, you're all wrong, Sis. You couldn't be right because you're too young to grapple with such a subject as that. You can't and don't know a thing about it. How could you, Kittens—you who have been sheltered from every breath that blows from the very outside world which you think you are portraying so successfully? It takes a full life, Sis, a life filled with joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, birth and death, success and failure, for a woman to write

about a subject on which the only note that can ring true must come from experience. And bless your dear heart, what experience have you had? I know you won't like it when I say that the article smacks of immaturity and inexperience in nearly every line. But that's a fact all the same, and, dear girl, before such experienced women as Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Noyes, Mrs. Farwell, to say nothing of Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Delameter, you would cut a sorry figure, for they have lived through and found to be hollow the very things which you hold forth about as the ruling elements in a woman's life. The vital trouble with the article is that a young woman's view of the future should be toward the home and the things worth while, while your view is directly away from it and toward a world where women chase rainbows.

Then, too, Kittens, you don't want to stand for that sort of thing: I mean both this talking before clubs and the views you have expressed in your paper. There is a certain type of the idle and restless woman, with nothing to do and nothing in her arms, who considers this talking before women's clubs business as the greatest "stunt" she can do. I should leave that sort of thing to that class. They are not pleasing to look at in their roles, and all retiring and modest women regard them that way.

I am not talking "through my hat," as Jack says, in this thing. I know this type of woman pretty well. A year ago our firm took a case for one of the principal women's organizations of this sort here in New York, and it was my bad luck to have the case handed over to me. I say "bad luck," because in preparing

"There Wasn't a Woman in the Bunch Who Had More Than a Superficial Knowledge of the Real and Vital Order of Things."

the papers and evidence in the case I ran up quite a little against the women who are the leaders in this club, and what I saw of them rubbed off a bit of the bloom from the peach. They were "peaches" in fact, Sis.

Of all unhealthy views about woman and her part in running of things, social and domestic, the opinions I heard from these women were the most unsanitary. Not only were the ideas unhealthy, but they were undigested, as well. There wasn't a woman in that bunch—and I met, off and on, a dozen or fifteen of them at close range—who had more than the most superficial knowledge of the real and vital order of things. They simply talked; they rarely said anything. Their views were a mass of theories, badly twisted and fearfully distorted. I had to be present at one of

their meetings, and one of the women—a leader in this whole movement of woman's clubs and woman's voting, and all that—let out the statement, expressed with a tremendous dramatic show, that "it was a much finer, a much bigger thing to be a woman than to be a mother"! There's wholesome philosophy for you! And the poor epigram, for that was all it was, with not a spark of sincerity behind it, was met with great approval by the hundred or more women present. Several of them looked back at me, poor mere man, with a defiance that plainly said: "There, how do you like that, young man?" And, ye gods and little fishes! I would have liked to tell them, only I wasn't asked.

For weeks I had run up against these women in their homes, and what I saw there would make about the best argu-

ments I can imagine against this whole women's club movement. I never saw such evidences of shirking of womanly, wifely and motherly duties. It was enough to nauseate a man. Such neglect of everything that makes for a home I never want to see again: such a wild running of children, such table manners, such meals—badly planned and "worsely" served, and such viewpoints of husbands as I got! As one mighty fine chap, the husband of one of these club women, whose house and children and servants were running at sixes and sevens, said to me in a moment of confidence: "This whole club business, on the part of women who are wives and mothers, is the most damnable thing that has ever happened," and his tone and looks spoke volumes. Poor chap! He looked as if he spoke from a bitter

experience, and I guess he did. There wasn't anything even approaching order in any one of the homes of these club women. How could there be? These women were forever gallivanting from one end of the country to another—gadding here and there or attending this or that convention, and if they were not off in some other city they were at meetings of their own home club. They were hard, Sis: I mean hard of views, hard of heart it seemed to me. It looked as if they had ice-water in their veins instead of good red blood. They struck me as a lot of disappointed women who were reaching out hither and thither, knowing not what they wanted, and getting it!

Of course you will say, "Yes, but I'm not going to be an active club woman. I'm going only to my own club," etc.

I know, Kittens. That's the way the thing begins. One step leads to another, and one club leads to a second. I know you will argue and say "not for me," and all that; but that's what lots of other women have said, and the first thing they knew they were in the whirl. And what does it all lead to? To just such neglect as I saw, not in one home, but in all those homes, with not a single exception. Besides all that, you want to decide whether you want to be one of these women who talk in public—and forever about things which they don't and can't understand. You know very well I'm not one of those men who think all a woman is good for is to stay at home, cook a steak, and bear and rear children. Not by a jugful, I'm not, and you know it, for we've had talks enough about that.

But neither am I one of those chaps who can be persuaded to see good where mightly little good exists or can exist, and the eight or nine months' active experience I had with the members of this New York woman's club convinced me of one thing: that the very conditions which surround a woman's club of this sort—and this happens to be one of those after which so many others throughout the country are patterned—are against a healthy influence, either on the women themselves or on their domestic interests. I grant you that if a woman is craving for publicity, if she wants to get under the limelight, get her name and her picture in the newspapers —then this sort of thing is just right for her. But what is there in that for a woman except an empty life, and regrets without number at the end of it all?

I am thinking now of three of these club women whose names every club woman in the country knows. Their names are constantly in the papers: they have all sorts of things to say on all sorts of questions that come up before the country—not a third of which they intelligently understand, as I very soon found out from talking with them —and what are their real lives? One of them has no home at all: she told me at the very outset that she had yet to meet a man, in her forty-odd years, who was true of heart and clean of mind. There's a healthy mental state for you! The second is married, but has no children, for, as she told me, they were a "hindrance to a woman's fullest development." I'm quoting her own words. That's womanly for you! The husband sat by, dropped his paper at this remark,

and looked at me in a way that men understand and then wish they didn't. I felt for this fellow! The third woman has a home and three children, and such a home! It is about as near—well, you can supply the word—as I can very well imagine a place to be. The children were unkempt, unmannered, unruly, and about as motherless a lot of poor youngsters as a man wants to see. I never saw this woman's husband, for he lived in another part of the house! Fancy!

Now, there is a true picture of the real life that lies behind three well-known club women of this country, each of whom you doubtless envy for her "gift" to get up and talk before clubs, etc.

Don't you let that sensible little head of yours go too far in the notion which

"She's a Great Girl. She Knew I Couldn't Afford a Hack, and So She Tactfully Proposed Walking to the Play."

you express in your article that "this is the golden age of women—for women to be and to do." For women to be women and to do as a wise God intended women to do—yes! But not what your words mean without your knowing it. You have said a trite thing that has been said a hundred times before, but it doesn't mean anything, and it strikes a very undesirable chord in the hearts of the best American women when they hear it. This isn't any more of a golden age for women than any other age in the history of the world—except that it seems to be an age when more women are quarreling with their Creator because they are women. And that's a pretty unworthy thing for any woman to do—especially for you, Kittens, when you thing of what the *mater* is and what she has done for us.

That's why, Kittens, the *mater* made no comment when she read your article. If you want to have comment from her, and one of those smiles that we know so well, and a good kiss and a hug in the bargain, just tell her that you've decided not to read the paper!

And watch the governor's eye kindle, too, when you say it! After you've told them, ask them what they think of this women's club fad, and there's a pair of the best shell sidecombs to a scarfpin in it for you that you'll get a good, wholesome point of view against the whole business.

Try it, Kittens, and, as I said before, you can't go far wrong if you get and stay next to the *mater* and the governor in such things. They won't ask you—that's a way parents have—but I'll throw in a tortoise-shell

backcomb, the best I can find, if they're not fairly bubbling over with curiosity as to what I'll write you about this club article of yours.

There are plenty of things worth while for a girl like you to take up—any one of them, if they concern the home, calculated to do you more good in a week, mentally, physically and morally, than all the women's clubs in the country can do for you in a year.

Tell you what you do, Kittens: put your paper away in your desk and take it out two or three years hence, and you'll thank your stars you never read it before the club, and you'll wonder how in the world you ever thought of such views!

And the best part of it will be, then, you'll have no after regrets, and they're mighty uncomfortable things: the best

things in the world to avoid if you can.

Don't, metaphorically, pull at my hair too much for all this. It is getting thin. Your handsome (!) brother isn't as young as he used to be, you know. Still, he's always

Your devoted

LENT.

"The Grip Originated at Bowery Dances."

LETTER NUMBER FIVE.

LETTER NUMBER FIVE,

In Which the Brother Has a Few Things to Say About Dancing.

Dear Kittens:

THAT is very decent of you to want to give "a dance" for me when I come home, and I'd say "Yes" in a minute if I had any idea it would be "a dance." But two or three little points in your letter have completely knocked that idea out of mind.

First: the dancing card you send me to "fill out" with the names of the girls I'd like to dance with. It says:

1. *Waltz* .....
2. *Two-step* .....
3. *Waltz* .....
4. *Two-step* .....
5. *Waltz* .....
6. *Two-step* .....

and so on through six more dances. But the same monotony all down the card; not a change from the two dances—and one of them not a dance at all: the two-step. I say not a dance because it isn't. What possible grace there is in this hideous and rowdy shuffle I fail to see.

The next time you go to a dance just sit out a two-step (if the chaps will let you) and watch this jerky and jumpy thing. Why, Sis, it's an insult to call a thing like that a dance. There's no dancing in it: it is just a case of grab and slide and shuffle: not a spark of poetic feeling about it: not the slightest talent is required to dance it. It is all right for "kids" of eighteen and younger who know no better. But for young women and men to shuffle through such a fool thing is lowering to one of the

"What Possible Grace There Is in That Rowdy Shuffle I Fail to See."

most graceful of the social arts, to say nothing of lowering to one's self—especially to a girl, who should stand for grace if for anything.

I like dancing, as you know, as well as the next man, but I do ask that my dancing shall be reputable and graceful, and the two-step is neither one nor the other. I don't wonder that Allen Dodworth, the father of American dancing, condemned it, and that at the last annual convention of the dancing-masters it was likewise condemned, and that teachers were asked not to give instruction in it any longer. A dance, if it has anything to commend it in the wide world —and to my mind it has much, for it can teach a girl or a chap more grace in an evening than all the Delsarte lessons she or he can get in a month—a dance, I say, should be the poetry of

motion, and what poetry or anything else except vulgarity is there in the two-step? Men won't go in for it, and I don't blame them. I won't, I know.

Pray, what has got into the heads of you girls that the lanciers, the quadrille, the minuet, and all the dances that are really dances and not shuffles, have been dropped off the cards of the modern dance? The waltz is, of course, at once the most beautiful, the most graceful and most satisfactory form of dancing there is, provided, of course, that it is danced well. That dance you girls seem to have kept, although I noticed at dances last summer that ten couples would be on the floor while a waltz was being played, while twenty couples would be up and dancing the two-step. The only consolation to me in the sight was that the two-steppers were mostly

"kids" of twenty and under. But where are the square dances? What ails them that you girls have relegated them to Art's ash-heap? Aren't they strenuous enough? Are they too graceful? Must everything we have in our American social life be vulgarized, even dancing?

I use the word "vulgarized," and in a rightful sense, too. In no country in the world, save in America, is there a feeling against dancing. Why is there here? "Oh," you exclaim, and then you put the reason on "a few narrow old people who never had any fun while they were young." Well—perhaps. But granting such premises, are these persons the only ones? I think not. I hear a growing objection to dancing among intelligent people. "Why?" you ask. Simply because you girls are allowing the dance to be vulgarized. No,

perhaps you don't know it; I don't think you do; still you are doing it all the same.

"How?" Well, in the first place, by allowing the silly two-step such a dominating place in your dances—although that will probably now be remedied by the dancing-masters themselves, as it should be.

Then, by the thoroughly vulgar method, which has recently come in, of dividing one dance between two or three partners. You say in your own letter: "If there are not dances enough, divide each among two or three of the girls, as you like." Not for me, Kittens, thank you! If a girl can't give me one dance to myself she can have it, and that's what other men are saying about this silly innovation. There is no possible excuse for this fashion, except that it

gives certain girls a chance to show off and pride themselves on the number of men they have danced with during the evening. But I don't care to be used by a girl to show off that kind of popularity, and if she's after the largest number of men's names on her card she is welcome to all she can get. But not mine. I have a little too much self-respect to have my name used for a display of vanity.

You say in your letter: "We'll not have the first dance until ten." That means ten-thirty, anyhow: perhaps later. There are twelve dances on the card you sent me: which also means twelve encores—twenty-four dances in all and a Virginia Reel! All this to begin at ten-thirty. And wind up, when? One, two or three A. M.? No, thank you, Kittens: I'm not going to

stand for that sort of thing, nor am I going to allow you to stand for it, either. And I don't intend to get a lot of fellows out that evening and keep them up until such unhealthful hours! They don't want to do it: they might come out of politeness to you or to me, but I don't intend to put them in any such position. And let me say right here that is why you girls can't get any men—I don't mean sop-heads now: I mean real men—to your dances. You girls can sleep the thing off the next morning. But the men have to be at their offices at eight-thirty or nine, and things are a bit too keen and on the jump in business nowadays for a chap to get himself into a boiled-owl condition—just for a dance. If you girls would start your dances at eight or nine, and dance until eleven, and gave a simple supper—a sensible

one, I mean, not your usual indigestible mass of rich sweets and cold sours—so as to let a fellow get home by eleven-thirty or twelve at the latest, you might find it easier to get a few men at your dances. But just so long as you keep on with these late or early hours they're going to keep away, and what's more, the few you get now will keep away, too. Men in business can't stand that sort of thing, Sis. Take my word for it, dear girl.

It is for you girls, too, to correct another thing at your dances, and that is the way you allow men to hold you while dancing. All sorts of liberties have been taken with the right way until now it is one of the most ungraceful sights imaginable to see a man's hand pasted on the middle of a girl's back. There is no excuse for this sort of a

"grip." To say nothing of the lack of nicety of it, or the possibilities it holds out to the wrong kind of a fellow, or the perspiration marks from the hand, which I have seen again and again left on a girl's dress when a man doesn't wear gloves or use a handkerchief (and you know as well as I do that all men do not), the thing is wrong. The whole idea of the hand back of the girl is to guide her, and the only place, when such guiding is or can be effective, is the proper place: at the waist-line. That was Dodworth's idea, and he was right, and if you will look at any of the old-time dancers you will see that the man's hand is always at the waist-line. There is where it belongs from the point of grace or effectiveness.

The "middle-of-the-back grip" originated at what we men call the "spieler

dances" in the Bowery, and how in the name of all decency the habit was ever allowed to creep into other circles is more than the average human mind can tell. A man's hand is anything but a graceful-looking object at its best, and when you see it plastered up against a girl's back it is about as far from a desirable picture as you would want it to be. Why borrow from the Bowery when you can borrow from the best seats of dancing in the world: the courts of Europe?

The next time, Kittens, you see a photograph of a foreign court ball, just notice where the hands of the men are, and you will invariably find them at the waists of their partners. Foreigners have repeatedly commented to me on the vulgarity of our American "grip" in dancing, and I am not surprised that

they do. Of course, it is all well enough to say, as I have heard American girls say, that the foreigners are atrocious dancers, and that to dance with an Englishman is either to have your feet stepped on or your dress torn. But that has nothing to do with the proper and only way for a man to hold a girl in the dance. We borrowed the dance from abroad, and if we can improve it, all well and good. But the present vulgar method of holding a girl is not an improvement; it is a distinct step down, and lowers the dance of the drawing-room to the dance of the Bowery hall.

These are the points that have made the dance unpopular with the right sort of men, and you girls will never get the men to your dances until you get your dances back to where they should be. We had pretty good times at our dances

fifteen or twenty years ago, and we didn't stand for those things. We had one partner for the whole dance; we had the square dances—and there's nothing more graceful or enjoyable than a double quadrille, for instance. We stopped our dances at a decent hour, and we held a woman in the dance as she should be held. And what have you girls gained by departing from these standards? Nothing that I can see except the growing disapprobation of intelligent parents—and you have lost the men!

Regular preachment this, isn't it? But your letter gave me the chance, and I've wanted to air my views on dancing for some time. Think about them, Sis: you'll find, if you take the trouble to ask, that most men think as I do about this subject.

I'm mighty glad to hear that Nell is getting to be her old bright self. My "best" to her, and tell Ned he's a trump to be so good to her and try to make her forget. Haven't found out yet, have you, which way the wind is blowing with Ned?

My love to the governor and the *mater* and kiss yourself heartily, and long for

Your "preachy" brother,

LENT.

LETTER NUMBER SIX.

LETTER NUMBER SIX,

In Which the Sister Is Told the Kind of Girls That Men Like Best in the Long Run.

My Dear Kittens:

CLEAR mad, aren't you: "simply boiling," as you say! Well, you let off steam all right! And all because I hadn't answered your last two letters on the day I received them. And why didn't I? you demand. Simply because, Sis, a chap just getting into practice in a town like this, where there are sixty lawyers for every case, has something else to do than to write private letters—yes, even home letters. And he hasn't to be forgetful of the home folks, either, to be too tired to write letters after a day at the office and

in court, with a stack of papers that have to be read in the evening before court opens the next morning.

But, thunder, I don't suppose you girls can understand that sort of thing. In fact, that is, to my mind, where a good many of you fail so utterly with men: you don't understand men's lives, and a lot of you don't seem to make the slightest effort to do so, either—and my sister among them, too!

For instance, in one of your letters you tell me with great glee how Ned Cooper took you to the theatre; that it was past midnight when you got home; that you had a little supper at the house; that the last trolley had gone long before Ned started home, and that he had to wait at the station for nearly an hour before he could get a train back to the city. You say Ned told a friend he

didn't reach his rooms until nearly three A. M., and you ask me: "Wasn't it a lark?" For you and Jess, yes. You two girls could sleep it off that day, and did, as you say, "straight through until past eleven." But how about Ned? It wasn't much of a "lark" for him. He had to be at the office the next morning before nine. That meant getting up for him by seven or a bit after. About four hours' sleep! How do you suppose he felt? That's the part of a lark you girls don't think much about. You'll say, "Oh, well; what of it? A man is strong. Besides, he doesn't care." But he does care—more than you girls think. Take a fellow like Ned: he is making his way, and Fate seems always against a man when he has been up late the night before and feels like a "boiled owl" the next morning, for as sure as luck that is

the very day that something important will come up and a chap can't get his mind in shape to meet it.

That is the real reason, only you don't know it, back of your scolding when you wrote that you girls don't see the men at dances whom you would like to meet. I know you don't, and what's more, you won't. The young fellows who are trying to make something of themselves in the world know mighty well that they can't go to these dancing affairs and be fresh the next morning for their work. They can't stand the late hours. A man's life, whether you girls know it or not, is his business. If it were not girls would have a sorry time getting their dressmaking, music and what-not bills paid.

You say, "The men go in New York: why is it that they don't out here?"

There's where you're wrong, Sis. You think, as I did when I came here, that the men go to these affairs here in New York because you see their names in the newspapers. Under that delusion I went to several of these affairs. But at not one of them did I meet men who amounted to shucks. I met chaps like Harry Leer and Jimmie Van Alden. But that type of fellow does not stand for anything in New York, except to lead a cotillion and that sort of thing. They are fellows either of easy means (inherited: because they couldn't earn a penny themselves), or who have a certain cleverness, although they generally shine only at one end, and with that end they dance. But the young fellows who have any backbone—not one of them did I see. In fact, there wasn't a man with whom you could talk on any topic worth

talking about. They could talk clothes, they could tell you the latest kink in "autos," they were up in polo and cross-country riding, and all that sort of thing. But that doesn't go very far here. That's all right at Tuxedo and Newport, but not in Nassau Street. Those fellows are what we men call "non-producers": some men call them "sissies."

They are like that young chap, Carlton, of whom you write so ecstatically. He dances well, and dresses well, and bowls up to the house at four in the afternoon with his "auto" and takes you and Jess for a spin to the Zoo. But that isn't the sort of fellow who amounts to a hill of beans in the long run. If he did he wouldn't be able to come to the house at four: he'd be at his office. Take my word for it, Kittens, that kind

of man doesn't wear. I know Carlton better than you do. We were at St. Paul's and at Yale together. He didn't study then, and he isn't working now, and when a fellow gets to be thirty and isn't at work there's something wrong with him. He's not the sort of chap that a girl can afford to be seen with often.

Of course you'll say I'm "poky." That's a mighty convenient word you girls have in calling a thing by its wrong name when you don't like the right name. But you watch Carlton and compare him with Ned, and I'll buy you the best bonnet at Le Reux's when I come home for Easter if Ned doesn't size up to ten of Carlton's kind.

That reminds me. You remember Charlie Wilson, who lived next to Bert Cox? He's in New York now, and he

dropped in at my rooms last night, and as he sat "filling the pipe" he raved about Carrie Poole. You know what a stunning girl she is! Well, Charlie was telling me that he took her to see Maude Adams the other evening, and when he got to her home in Brooklyn she asked him to come in. After a while she said that while she would love to have him stay longer—they were having a bit of supper with her mother and her two cousins from Alabama—she knew he was a business man and had to keep hours. He had to come 'way up town here nearly to Harlem. She knew that and appreciated that it would take him a full hour, if not more, to get home. That struck Charlie more than anything Carrie ever said to him. It won him "hands down," as we say. "That's the sort of girl, Lent, to tie up to," he said.

"She thinks a bit beyond the present hour and the fun she is having. She's got a fellow's interest at heart." And she has! And I'll bet a cooky Charlie will propose to her within a month.

Charlie, by-the-way, was telling me that Jennie Boyd threw herself into a huff the other evening and broke her engagement with Jack Otis, and the cause of it is, in a way, apropos of what I have been just writing. It seems that Jennie wanted to make up a "set" for a little impromptu affair she was going to have, and thoughtlessly tried at once to reach Jack at his office by telephone. It so happened that Jack was busy talking over a big "deal" which he had engineered with the head of his house and two or three other principals when the boy came in and told him that "Miss Boyd wanted to speak with him

at the telephone." Of course, he had to excuse himself to his employers and go to the 'phone. But it was awkward, for the message caught Jack just as he was in the middle of explaining the details of his "deal" to the firm, and that conference had to wait for ten minutes while Jack went downstairs and talked with Jennie about her "set." It didn't do him any good with his firm, he knew, to be called out of an important business conference to answer a private 'phone message.

That evening he told Jennie about how her message caught him, as a decently frank chap would, anxious for his business welfare. But she took it as an affront, and, like a spoiled child, muttered something that she should mean more to him than his "old business," and, bless me! if one word didn't lead

to another until she up and broke their engagement. Of course, Jack is upset, and I'm going to see him to-morrow evening. But if he gives me half a chance I'll tell him that I think he is well rid of a girl who doesn't seem to realize that a man's office is no place for the making of social engagements, and who cannot see that she has no right to break into his business hours by calling him up on the 'phone. If you write her don't say too much in the direction of encouraging her to get Jack back. A girl of that sort is best left to her own petulant spirits and has no place in the life of a fellow who wants to make his way in the world.

I'd rather see Jack tie up to Ruth Elliott: she's more his style and the kind that men like. I know you girls wonder why we men think of Ruth as we do.

I heard you say to Jess and Nell last winter that you couldn't make out Ruth's success with men, because she isn't pretty and hasn't those little ways that most of you girls have. All the same, men think she's all right, Sis. Girls as pretty and light-headed as Jess may go well for an evening's fun, but Ruth is the kind of girl that men pick out for something more lasting. You'd never catch her allowing Archie to spend something like his weekly salary on an evening's fun with her as Jess did last winter. Not on your life! She's what Charlie called her, "a great girl," and when I asked him why, he said: "Why, hang me, if she didn't tactfully arrange it the other evening when I proposed the play to her that she'd prefer to walk rather than to take a carriage, since she wanted the exercise and the

fresh night air. She knew mighty well I couldn't really afford a hack, but that I wanted to do the right thing with her. She simply wouldn't have it, and got around it that way. I didn't let on, of course, that I saw through her game, but I could have hugged her, old man, right there and then, for her thought."

Well, here's your letter, and I'll try my prettiest, Sis, to write you oftener—if I can! My love to you and the governor and the *mater!* Tell her that the "unmentionables" she sent me were all right, and that I felt her love woven into each stitch. We have a great *mater,* one in a hundred thousand, Kittens.

As you say, "she's a darling." The governor had good taste, hadn't he?

My regards to Ned, and tell him I've found a new "mixture" that doesn't

burn the tongue, and that I'll send him a quarter-pound can of it.

Yours, in a bath of repentance,

LENT.

LETTER NUMBER SEVEN.

LETTER NUMBER SEVEN,

In Which the Brother Tells of a Happening That Disturbed a Fashionable Dinner Party.

My Dear Kittens:

OF COURSE I shall be adjudged "disagreeable" again, or, to vary it, "disobliging." But all the same, good sister of mine, I cannot fall into your hysterical (yes, hysterical) plan that you, Jess and Lucy shall come here to New York for a week, with your pockets full of money, and try "to help those dear unfortunate people on the East Side." That is, to put it plainly, you girls want to go "slumming." Well, you can't, Kittens,

not with me. In the first place, I have not the time to go with you: I don't know any one who has, and even if I did I wouldn't stand for my sister's doing that sort of thing. I notice, by-the-way, that Nell said she didn't care to come, and that Ned hadn't the time—no, nor the inclination, he might have added. Two sensible folks, those.

For conscience' sake, don't fly off and get mad when I ask: What do you three girls know about the poor? Nothing. How could you? You say, for instance, you would like to see how working-girls live, and find out how you could help them. Now, what arrant nonsense! In the first place, what do you suppose working-girls are like, and where do you think they live? In one house, I suppose, where you could go and look them over, as you would go to the Zoo

to see the animals. Has it ever occurred to you girls that it is yourselves, and not the working-girls, who need help? Your very attitude to help the working-girl is one of condescension. Has it ever occurred that the thoughts, the feelings, the aspirations, the ambitions—all that make up the world of the working-girl—may be, and are, as fine as your own or those of any girl you know? The fact that we were born in a certain social sphere, or that the governor has been fortunate enough to accumulate some means, does not entitle us, my dear Kittens, to go and seek out those who are just as sensitive in their feelings, and who value their home privacy just as much as we do.

As a matter of fact, you dear little goose of a sister, this "slumming" business is pure nonsense. It is a profana-

tion of the word charity, and is followed only by women of over-weening vanity, a prurient curiosity, or of an over-wrought and hysterical sentimentality. And do you fancy for a minute that this "submerged tenth," as you choose to call it (which, by-the-way, you should use with quotation marks, for it is a borrowed phrase), relish this invasion upon their privacy by these foolish society girls and idle women? Let me tell you a story for the dramatic quality of which I know no equal. And it will be new to you, for good pains were taken to keep it out of the newspapers, and up to this time none of us who were part of the incident ever told of it.

It happened at the Clarke Uptons' last winter, just as they moved into their new and swell Central Park house, at a dinner-party—one of the jolliest I ever

attended, and, as it turned out, the most memorable I was ever at. We were a very merry party, and were, I should say, about half or three-quarters through the dinner when Mrs. Upton gave a scream, and cried to her husband: "Clarke!" We all looked up to see—not Mrs. Upton, but there in the parted portières between the dining-room and the hall stood a young fellow, the very picture of a Bowery tough. He had the typical—apparently unshaven—face of what we men call a "bruiser," wore a black Derby hat, badly dented in, and a pretty well-worn overcoat buttoned up to his chin. He stood there calmly surveying the scene, looking first at the dinner-party and then all around the room with an expression apparently full of the keenest interest.

The two flunkies who were waiting

on us and the head butler were the first to recover from the surprise that was upon all of us, and made a concerted move toward the man.

"Hold on, boys, hold on," came from the bruiser; "I know what I'm about, and I'd advise you not to meddle with me or my business," and he shot a glance at the flunkies and Joseph, the butler, that had lots in it, I tell you, Kittens. All three stood still where they were with that fellow's eyes on them.

Clarke had by this time pulled himself together, and as host it was now up to him.

"Well, then, you fellow," he said, "suppose you tell *me* your business."

"Oh, I'm just looking around to see what I can see, that's all," he replied in an easy, feel-perfectly-at-home-here sort of a way. And then, as quick as

a wink, seeing Clarke and a couple of us make a move toward him, he said with fire fairly shooting out of those eyes of his:

"One minute, gentlemen, before you go too far. I am, or rather up to a year ago I was, a prize-fighter, and there's nothing coming to me from any one here, or from any three of you for that matter, that I couldn't take care of —not for a minute—but I'm not out for trouble unless you want it, and then I'm chuck-full of it."

It was a bit in the way of a challenge that some of us men there didn't exactly like, and as the young fellow's keen eyes traveled like lightning over the group (most of us were on our feet by this time) he saw it, and he said:

"With those gentlemen there" (waving over to where we were) "I have no

business, but I have with you, sir, for I suppose you are Mr. Upton."

Then, turning abruptly to the flunkies who had been moving toward him, he said in a voice that left no room for two interpretations:

"In your places, there!"

"Come, come," began Clarke, but the fellow interrupted:

"Not so quick, Mr. Upton—I have a right here, just as much right, sir, as Mrs. Upton" (with, I must say, a courtly bow to Clarke's wife) "and that young fellow over there" (pointing to Boyce Price) "had in my sister's room this morning. He didn't have the manners to take off his hat when he was in the room, nor his coat. I have," and with that, with what looked like one movement, he took off his hat, pulled off his overcoat, dropped them on the floor,

yanked out a handkerchief, passed it over his face, and there stood before us a fine-looking young fellow in full evening dress, with a face as clean-shaven as my own.

Gad, Sis, it was dramatic, as dramatic as anything I ever saw, and done like a flash. Every one of us took a breath, and I couldn't help admiring the chap.

"I'll trouble you to take my coat and hat," he said to one of the flunkies, and then moving a step or two in the room he turned to Clarke and said: "Mr. Upton, my name is ——" (I can't give his name, Kittens, for you would know it, I think, from things he has written). We all looked astonished, at which he said: "I see it is not unfamiliar to you. I knew it would be known to Mrs. Bleecker there, as she read a little thing of mine at the Waldorf last week. But

the reason I came here tonight, sir, was simply to return the call of Mrs. Upton and her party at my sister's house. If your wife and her friends feel that they can come to my sister's house without an invitation, and without as much as knocking at her door, and see her at her work, it seemed to me that I was just as much entitled to come here without asking your leave and see you at your dinner. If the poor are to be 'slummed' by the rich I can't for the life of me see why the rich shouldn't be 'slummed' by the poor."

Clarke wanted to say something at this point, but our uninvited guest held up his hand and stayed the remark, whatever it was, and said:

"There's nothing to say, sir. There's nothing more for me to say. I have said all that I came to say except this:

I apologize to you, sir, to Mrs. Upton and your guests, for this interruption, and for coming into your house and room without an invitation and with my hat on. And I shall expect your friend there " (pointing to Boyce Price) "to call at my sister's house at ten o'clock to-morrow morning and make the same apologies to my sister. I'll trouble you," he said to Oscar, the flunky, and, taking his overcoat and hat, he bowed, and in a minute we heard the front door close, leaving us gaping at each other in absolute amazement.

It takes me some time to tell it, Kittens, but actually the whole thing didn't take five minutes, it was so neatly done and quickly over.

You can imagine that the dinner-party was a bit broken up after that, and the women fairly dropped into their

chairs from the tension. But, ye gods and little fishes, it was fine, Kittens! That chap won me hands down, and later in the evening I talked with the hall-butler and asked how he got into the house.

"Oh, I knew him, sir, from my early days, sir" (he didn't say what his early days were), "and when I opened the door he recognized me and said, as he pushed by me, 'All right, Con, this is on the straight. No crooked work here. No "peach" '—which meant, sir, I was not to get a policeman, and I knew when he said anything he meant it, sir. I was amazed to see him here, but I knew he was always straight when he said a thing, sir."

Well, I got his address, and next afternoon after court was over I called on him, told him who I was, and said

"She Dropped the Five Dollar Bill On My Sister's Washboard."

I wanted to shake his hand; and so did Clarke, who went with me.

"Oh, that's all right, sir," he said. "It is strictly between us, I hope. It wasn't quite right, Mr. Upton" (turning to Clarke), "for two wrongs never make a right. But I was in the back room of my sister's place when your wife and her friends called, and I was hot, hot all through. I knew Mrs. Upton didn't mean it the way I took it, and the way my sister took it, but when she dropped the five-dollar bill on my sister's washboard—I returned it to you this morning by mail—it was just too much, and I made up my mind to show to one woman at least that there wasn't any sense of decency or fairness in this slumming business. I ask your pardon, Mr. Upton," he concluded, reaching out his hand. Clarke took it

with a bang, and said, like the man he is:

"Pardon, man? Not at all. My thanks, and hearty thanks at that. You taught us all a lesson we shouldn't have learned in a thousand years so well, as Mrs. Upton said she would say to your sister this morning when she made her call of apology."

Now, then, Kittens, this story—and it's a true one to the letter—will tell you more than all the preaching that I could do to show you the foolishness of this "slumming" business, and how it is taken by the "slummed." Keep out of it, Kittens, you and your girl friends. You girls have no business with the people of the "other half." The only people who can go among them and do them good are those who have had experience so wide and so deep as to com-

pass the sorrows and trials of this world, and who are mature in sympathy, feeling and imagination. And as for the working-girls, you have them, Sis, right in your own home: the maids and the cook.

Be patient, be considerate of them: be womanly and human with them as you would want some one to be with you if you were in their places. There's where real charity begins: right at home, and, believe, me, the girl who can find no charity work at home is not the girl to do it outside.

Did Boyce Price go, you ask, and apologize? Rather! The little idiot: he went from sheer fear. He was afraid he'd get his silly face pushed in. The pity of it is that he did go. If he hadn't he might have "heard something to his advantage"—if a good licking could be

of any advantage to a nincompoop of his type.

It's midnight. It never does for my next day's work to write you these letters. So here's a yawny love to you and all from

Yours, for no "slumming,"

LENT.

LETTER NUMBER EIGHT.

LETTER NUMBER EIGHT,

In Which the Brother Replies to Some of His Sister's Strictures on Men.

Dear Man-Angry Kittens:

YOU certainly had your go at men in your last letter, and I couldn't help wondering whether they—or, perhaps, one in particular—had ruffled your feathers in some way. But let us see what made you angry with them.

First, it was about Beekman Price—poor Beek!

"And what do you think, Lent? Here poor, dear Gladys Price is dead just about a year, and that nasty husband of hers, Beekman, with all his deep sorrow (deep, indeed!), has gone and en-

gaged himself to Claire Willets! Now Claire was one of Gladys's friends, and she, of course, used to go in and out of their house all the time. And in that way Beekman got to know of her. But what makes it so positively disgusting to me is that Beekman must have been in love with Claire while Gladys was alive. For a man can't get over his sorrow—over the loss of his wife—and fall deeply enough in love with another girl to ask her to marry him, all in one year! Surely you, dear Lent, won't say he can, will you now? Of course not. It's positively indecent, that's what I think!"

Come, now, Kittens, isn't "indecent" a pretty strong word, and just because Beek has "found himself again," fallen in love with a girl and asked her to marry him?

Now as a lawyer I should say that

your reasoning that Beek was in love with Claire while Gladys was alive is hardly good, and as a man I should say it is—well, plain rot! Beek isn't that sort of chap, sister mine, and I think I know him better than you do. Because Beek is going to marry one of his first wife's best chums is, to my mind, more of a tribute to that wife than aught else. And by what possible variety of feminine logic do you arrive at such an unjust conclusion as to a double affection on Beek's part?

Beek was honestly and devotedly in love with Gladys, and when she was alive he had no eyes or heart for Claire or any other girl. His heart was full and his happiness complete. He looked upon Claire as Gladys's friend and as a nice, companionable girl. I know, for example, that when Gladys was very ill

at the time her first baby was born, Beek felt mighty grateful to Claire for the way she sat up nights with Gladys and wouldn't leave her. But there was no love for her—not the kind of love you mean, at any rate, any more than he felt that kind of love for Nell because she was a brick in nursing Gladys when she was thrown from her auto. But, bless your heart, Kittens, a man doesn't love every girl who is good to his wife or who happens to be much in his house as his wife's friend.

Then Gladys became ill, and Claire was like a sister to her in her watchfulness and care during those weeks of fever. And Beek was grateful to the last degree to her: he'd have been a brute if he wasn't. And when Gladys died he felt as if he would never recover from the shock, and he was honest in

that grief. Thunder, girl, don't I, who was with him for nearly a week afterward, know that? In love with Claire? My conscience, Kittens, Beek never thought of her that way.

But then he pulled himself together. He had to for the sake of his two little ones if not for his own sake, and as the days went on, the more the fact was forced upon him that he was lonely—as lonely as only a man can be who has enjoyed eight years of absolute happiness—is it any wonder that he turned to Claire? Who knew him better: who knew his children better, who mothered them, who undressed them at night and dressed them in the morning, who heard their little "Now I lay me down to sleep," who was Gladys to them if not Claire? Claire loved those children not only as such a real, womanly girl,

with every instinct of motherhood in her, as Claire is, but she loved them for Gladys's sake. And I know from her people what hard work they had to keep her away from the little ones after Gladys passed away. Her big, fine, womanly heart just went out to those two motherless kids.

Now I believe, Kittens, in the theory that there is some indefinable something, I don't know what to call it, except that I believe it is Divine, which draws the right people together, and that subtle chord was all the time drawing Claire and Beek together. They wanted each other, although neither one of them really knew it. It happens, dear sister, that I know more about this little affair than you think, for when Beek was here with me three months ago he told me all about it, and you would be

"Claire Loved Those Children for Gladys's Sake."

the first, Kittens, to cover that pretty head of yours in shame, and cry out for forgiveness at Beek's hands, if you could have heard him speak of Gladys, and have seen him actually fight against the feeling that was slowly but surely drawing him to Claire. I asked him one evening, finally, why he seemed to resist Claire: why he kept aloof from her.

He said, "Lent, not for my sake, but for Claire's sake. I know what people will say, and I don't mind it so far as I am concerned, for I know where I stand. But there's Claire. She was as good as gold to Gladys: she has been a mother to the kids, and aside from the talk of any second marriage on my part, there's always the point to consider whether Claire wouldn't think I married her out of gratitude."

"How about your own feelings for Claire—just in a general way, I mean, old man?" I asked him.

"There's no doubt of that," he said; and I could see from his face there wasn't, either. "Gladys taught me how to love a woman, and I love Claire with that ripeness of love, if you may call it so, which a man must learn, and which after years he gives to the woman who has taught him. But, of course, she isn't here," he concluded, and then he stood looking for a full ten minutes in my grate, and I smoked and said not a word.

Finally I asked, "How about Claire, old man? Got any line on her feelings?"

"Not the first," he said. "I haven't the faintest idea how she'd take it, and

I haven't tried to find out. It didn't seem—well, I didn't, that's all."

Well, we talked as two fellows can who know each other pretty well, and it was 'way into the night before we parted. But we left with the idea that he would see Claire and tell her frankly how he felt, and leave it to her to decide. I told him to let the talk that might follow "go hang," as we men say. The only thing he'd need to think of was whether he was right, and then leave it to Claire. And he did, and you know the result.

So, Kittens, you see I was closer to this matter than you knew, and that is why I was a bit put out when your letter came. Of course, now you will say, "Forgive me, Lent: I didn't know." But, honest, now, Kittens, wouldn't it have been better to have withheld ex-

pressing your judgment, even to your brother, until you knew more?

Besides, dear girl, why didn't you make a fuss and pass immature judgment on Del Farriman when she married again—a scant year after George died? Instead of that, if I remember right, you girls trooped to her house to congratulate her, and then to her wedding! You said then, "Won't it be fine for Del's boys to have a father again!" Well, how about Beek's two little girls? Don't they need a mother just as much, or can little girls get along better without a mother than boys can without a father?

Thunder, if it comes to that, how about May Gast? She didn't wait even a year, yet you girls flocked to her second wedding! Is it more incumbent upon a man to wear sackcloth and ashes

than for a woman? Where's your logic, Kit? You say:

"I think second marriages are wrong, don't you?"

No, I don't. I am in favor of a fourth marriage if through it two people can find their fullest happiness, and if without it they fail of finding that. I want my wife—if ever I have one—to marry again if I should die before her, if the right man comes along and she loves him, and I would think she was foolish if she failed to do so simply because of my memory. I don't believe in that sort of grief: generally it isn't real, and where it is real it is unwise. A man can be just as true to the memory of his first wife in the happiness he finds in another of her sex as by depriving himself of that happiness. I know it sounds very noble and beautiful, this mourning

away one's life for a departed husband or wife—that is, in romances. But I'm speaking now of what is healthiest and best for us on this very practical planet of ours.

I know a very fine chap here in New York whose wife died ten years ago, and he grieves as much for her today as he did then. I can't help admire and respect such a fellow and bow before such a grief. But all the same I think it would be infinitely better for him, and I know it would have been better for his three little children, if he had pulled himself together, fallen in love with some good woman who would have made him happy and given his children the joy of a mother's presence and influence in their home and lives.

Now, as to your second grievance over men:

"Fancy the latest! Joyce Peck has asked to be divorced from Clara! There's a man for you! A beast, I say. Poor Clara! She has given her best years to that brute; has borne him his children; and now that her freshness is gone he's through with her and casts her off, and wants to marry that snip of a Grace Ford! That's manhood!"

Not quite so fast, Kittens, dear. That type of man does exist, and no one can loathe him more than I do, Sis; but it so happens that Joyce is not of that stripe.

I can't say I admire Joyce tremendously, and it is not for me to comment upon this step of his, since our Cincinnati firm has his case. But, good sister of mine, there's another side to that story, too. There always is, you know —even to a lawsuit, unwilling as one

might be to think so after hearing some lawyers plead for their clients.

Joyce is not a society man: he is a student—too much of a student, I think, for his own good. The only things he knows, during the evenings, are his books and his engineering maps. But Clara knew this when she married him, for he has not changed a particle, and instead of trying to draw him out of his shell she left him to withdraw into it deeper, while she went off cantering here and there nearly every evening. Of course, to such a state of affairs there is generally only one end. Now, I don't excuse Joyce, except that Clara said when she married him she was going to settle down, since Joyce told her that his work wouldn't permit his doing the society act. But she didn't settle down: hers isn't the nature that settles. She's

a butterfly who flits here and there: likes the lights, and the band playing. Joyce saw his home at sixes and sevens, with his wife going out to dinner nearly every evening, and no one to talk to about his problems. There was no evening lamp in that house, Kittens, and no hearthstone, and where those two vital elements in a home are lacking—well, look out for squalls!

Now, a man needs a woman's sympathy in his work if he is going to do things in the world (yes, it is I that say it as perhaps shouldn't!), and if he can't get that sympathy from his wife in his home, where he has a right to find it and get it, mark me, he's going to get it elsewhere. And "elsewhere" in Joyce's case was Grace Ford—a "snip" in your eyes, but an all-fired clever girl, full of initiative, a fertile mind, and just

the girl for Joyce to talk his work over with and get sympathy and help. The point is there: Joyce should have married Grace Ford. But he didn't know her when he could have married her, and Clara was foolish enough to let him find her out. And there's where I blame Clara or any other wife who lets a husband find out a woman who is better qualified to help him than she is. If she isn't so well qualified she ought to make herself so, and this Clara could have done, for she has brains—only she was after a life of pleasure. Well, she's had it.

So you see, Kittens, there's much in everything: it all depends on how you look at it. There's one thing for you, and a good many of your girl friends, to guard against in such matters as these, and that is—a snap judgment.

Always wait until you know both sides of a question. That's a lawyer's training, and it would be a mighty good thing if it were in the curriculum of every school and college in the land.

I am not excusing men: I am not defending them. One point let me make clear to you: There are scores of cases of second marriages and divorces where the men are to blame, where they trample under their dirty feet the love and sacrifice of some sweet, pure girl who has given all she had to give them. There are men walking this beautiful earth of ours who have no business to walk it. But that's God's business, Sis; not yours nor mine. I am simply standing up for the best there is in men: not their worst. They have a best side—that side is generally developed by the love of a woman; and I am always for

giving the devil his due. Man is not an angel, but there's no use in painting him blacker than he is, and my rule is with man, as with woman: Believe the best of him always until the other has been proven. But be sure that the other is proven first: that is, by cold, hard facts, and not by hearsay, gossip or circumstantial evidence. These latter, Sis, have condemned many an innocent man and woman, and have also hanged a few!

But honestly, Kittens, why all this sudden fuss on your part about men marrying a second time and "casting off" their wives? Do you already hear the tread of another woman's walk on your grave, or see yourself displaced? Rather premature, isn't it?—since you are not married—not even engaged! Or are you thinking about both: honest,

now? If not, why these thoughts manward and marriageward? That's what's puzzling

Your wondering, but loving

LENT.

LETTER NUMBER NINE.

LETTER NUMBER NINE,

In Which the Brother Tells of the High Opinion He Has of the Man His Sister Is Engaged to Marry.

You Dear, Happy Kittens:

SO YOU found out at last the way the wind was blowing with Ned —and you are "simply deliriously, intoxicatingly happy." Of course you are, Sis, and I didn't need your telegram or your twelve-page letter to tell me, either. I knew you would be, for now you know what I knew all along—ever since Ned made a clean breast of it to me a year ago. In fact, I knew it before that from *him*, although he didn't say a word. But it gave me a splendid chance to get used to the idea

of losing my sister. Yes, I know you say in your letter, "We'll always be the same." But we won't, Sis, just the same. It is Ned now—Ned, Ned, Ned. Did you realize that in your twelve-page letter you mentioned him just eighty-one times: only seven times on each sheet? (Ned's letter, by-the-way, was a little more restrained: he only mentioned you sixty-nine times in eleven pages! That's what I call self-poise!) It's all right, dear: only from now on it's Ned first and Lent second. And it ought to be. I'm going to be "the convenient brother"! Well, that's a good role, and I'll try to play it to the Queen's taste—Ned's "Queen," I mean, for in his letter you were his "Queen" six times. There were a few "darling girls," "best girl in the worlds," "a girl with a marvelously fine conception of

things," but the "Queens" had it! Well, he's partly right about you, and you are partly right about him. Wait a minute, Sis, wait a minute! My conscience, no! I don't mean the slightest disrespect to Ned—not a whit. My forehead touches the floor this instant! But you see, Kittens, I've known Ned pretty well: no other chap knows better what a fine fellow he is: only, just now—well, you see, if he were all you picture him he'd simply be divine, you know.

And if he were divine you couldn't live with him—that is, not comfortably, you know. He's all you say he is—and more. And that "more" you'll find out when he's your husband (pretty blush, Kittens, just as pretty as it could be). Then you'll see Ned for what he is: not out of the eyes of "de-

lirious" happiness, but out of the eyes of experience. For you know, Kittens dear (although, come to think of it, you don't), men are just a little different after marriage from what they are before. Some are different, and not for the better: some are otherwise. And Ned is one of the otherwise kind. I know him pretty well: I've seen him in some pretty tight places, but I never saw him "duck" yet. Ned never "shone" in the way that some of the fellows did who were forever hanging around you at your beck and call, and always on the spot when you dropped that inevitable handkerchief that a girl never seems to be able to put where it won't drop! He's not one of the brilliant sort: he's not what we men call a "shiner." But you'll always know where to find Ned, and that will be a very

comfortable feeling for you in your life with him. He will wear well! Balzac hits off you two very well when he says: "To be happy with one you love you must have opposite characters and identical tastes." The "opposite character" part comes in that Ned being so much older will have the wisdom born of experience—the only wisdom worth having. He's ten years older than you are, and that is a good, safe difference, for a man doesn't know much (although he thinks he does) before he is thirty-two. And it's a good age from your side, for to be as young as a man a woman should be at least six years younger, and, to my mind, ten is even better.

I remember how fearful he was when he spoke about you to me that his moderate income would influence you to

be nothing but a sister to him! But I told him he was dead wrong there, although I notice it took him a year, all the same, to screw up his courage and believe me right. I gave him a long talk on this: that he mustn't get the notion in his head that you expected to start with him where you'd leave off with the Governor! But he was full of the comforts that surrounded you, and all that, and three months after our first talk he came to me with exactly the same fear, picking up our argument just where we left it the first time. Was it fair to you, and so forth, and so forth? If he hadn't been in such dead earnest I would have laughed at him. I told him his two thousand a year was better for both of you than the Governor's two hundred thousand. It would compel you to start just as the Governor did

with the *mater,* in a small cottage, and that you'd get together, as did they, in a way that nothing else can bring two people together. You would have something to strive for: to save for, and, after all, it's self-denial and sacrifice that bring people really together. I told him that it was an old-fashioned idea, but I knew that idea was in your heart as it is in the heart of every girl of the right sort who loves a chap.

You'll have the time of your lives in your little home, beginning with little and growing into things as they come to you. For grow you two will. Ned is not the sort of a chap to stand still. I know he has the confidence of the best business men of Cincinnati, and that is a starting-point for a chap second to none. I remember last spring hearing a lot of men at the Merchants' Club

talking about Ned, and I realized then that their eyes were on him, and, more than that, they had confidence in him. Other chaps have said to me: "Ned hasn't done much," but they forget that it is sometimes what a man doesn't do as often as what he does do that attracts the attention of men. When these very same fellows who spoke of Ned were bowling in their autos, or having a game of one hundred points of billiards at the club at noon, Ned was working away for dear life. I remember trying him one day. "Come on, Ned," I said after lunch, "let's have a turn at billiards." "No, thanks, old man, not now," he replied; "I'll play you this evening if you wish," and although I urged him and made rather light of his getting back to the office, and although he had every reason to stand well with

"You Will Have the Time of Your Lives in Your Little Home."

me as the brother of his "beloved," there was "nothing doing!" Twice after that I tried to lure him from his work in daylight hours, but I might just as well have tried to move the Flatiron Building. Now that's the stuff, shown in little things, that men are made of.

Now, don't show Ned this letter, and I'll tell you a story about him. You know, of course, he was doing musical work for "The News" in his college days. Well, one day the owner of the paper called him, and told him a certain artist was to appear that evening for the first time in a public concert; that this artist was a friend of his family, particularly of his wife, and that he wanted some nice things said of her in the paper next morning. The next day the paper contained a fulsome notice of the young singer, and old —— called

Ned into his office when he reported that afternoon for assignments, and acknowledged the notice.

"I didn't write it, Mr. ——," said Ned.

"How was that?" asked the old gentleman.

"I couldn't, Mr. ——," replied Ned. "I should have gone to that concert lacking the one thing that a critic should have when he goes to hear or see whatever he is to criticise: the right to say what he honestly thinks."

I heard about this incident from the old man's secretary, not from Ned, and he told me how the old man grunted with disgust and turned to his desk. Ned went to the managing editor, tendered his resignation, and the next day the old man sent for him, asked him to remain, and tendered him the position

of regular musical critic of the paper if he would leave college. Now Ned needed the money sorely, as I happened to know, but he refused, saying that his college course meant more for him than any position on the paper. But I knew Ned well enough to know that no amount of dollars could have induced him to work for a man who had, even for a single time, so forgotten his own self-respect and the honor of his paper, and had failed to give Ned credit for either. A year after that I was talking to the old man, and I mentioned Ned and this incident to him. He turned to me like a flash, and his keen gray eyes fairly snapped as he said: "Carson, I'd give half my interest in the paper to have on my staff six men like that. They would make 'The News' the greatest power in New England."

Now that's the way Ned has done things right along, and in his law practice he has stood for the same sterling honesty, never swerving a hair's breadth. I know of two bully good cases —I mean now from the financial side— that he could have had, in fact he was urged to take, and they would have meant big money to him. But he didn't like the looks of the cases, didn't have confidence in the firms that wanted to retain him, and he declined and stood pat. All this is in line for a success that may come slower, but when it does come it sticks, and that's the kind of a success that Ned is building up.

You're safe with such a chap—safer than with any other man I know of. Ned's morals are clean and his hands are clean, and I don't know a fellow in all my circle of friends who has

ideals that are high and yet so possible for every man to attain. I grant you Ned isn't much as looks go: he will never cut much of a figure in the dance, but he's all there when it comes to the things that count, and that is what my sister, and any other fellow's sister, wants in a man, if only more girls had the sense to see it and know it.

I'm prouder of you than ever, Kittens, proud that my sister measured up to my standard of her and had the good sense to turn from the chaps that hovered around her and gave the most precious feeling that a girl can give a fellow to the right chap. I never doubted you for an instant, although I confess once in a while the rumors I heard and read about you in "The Enquirer" annoyed me. But I always clung to the belief that my sister was true gold, and

that when the time came her true nature would lead her to give her heart to the one who deserved it and who has the love and the consideration to take care of it and the life that goes with it. God bless you, Sis, and remember your old-time chum and brother asks you, as one of his last words, to take these little lines into your married life. You can live by them, Kittens:

"In essentials, unity.
In non-essentials, liberty.
In all things, charity."

I'll wire you what train I'll come on next week. Meantime, kiss the *mater* for me, and tell the Governor that I'm with him heart and soul when he said to you: "Kittens, you'll bring me a son I'll be proud of," although it looked a bit queer on paper when I first read it! Tell Nell she and I will keep each other com-

pany in our single blessedness (!) over the chessboard while you and Ned are —well, fill it in yourself for

Your joyful and devoted

LENT.

THE SISTER'S ANSWER TO HER BROTHER'S LETTERS.

THE SISTER'S ANSWER TO HER BROTHER'S LETTERS,

In Which "Kittens," Now Mrs. Edward King, Tells How She Liked What Her Brother Wrote Her.

You Dear Old Lent:

I WISH that I had you here this minute that I might give you a good bear's hug and tell you how dearly I love you and how truly I thank you for your wise and kind guidance of this silly, scatterbrained little sister!

The reason for this violent attack of affection is the fact that I have been rereading your letters to me, written before I was married. I came upon the packet, duly tied up and labeled "Lent's Preachments," when sorting over an old catch-all trunk. I sat right down on

the floor then and there and read every word of them. It was quite a different girl, Lent dear, who read them today from the one who first received them. I was indignant then—all the more so that I had to fight my own inner consciousness (it kept sneaking in the thought that you were right) and Nell's gentle championship of your wider experience and disinterested love for me—for Nell always sees your side of every subject, I happen to notice. I called you "poky" and old-fashioned, over-particular, extreme.

You know, dear, that girls like above all things to do as the others do—and what a tremendous influence their examples have upon each other they have little idea!—and all the girls did wear low-necked gowns to dances, and as long as the bodices were perfectly mod-

"I Came Upon the Packet When Sorting Over An Old Catch-All Trunk."

est in cut I could see no harm in them. But after your letter came I could not do it. I was not convinced that you were right, but when the girls wondered and questioned about why I did not do as the rest did I quoted your arguments —and in defense of you I converted myself.

Do you remember the lawyer who was suddenly asked: "Are you always of your own opinion?" And he answered, laughing at himself: "Yes, when I begin to talk." That was my case. I could not resist my own eloquence.

To tell the truth, I found that a white gown with lace filling in the space from the edge of the low-cut bodice to the throat was really most becoming—but when I had a perfect dream of a frock that looked as though a softly blushing

pink rose had obligingly turned into a gown, and my glass told me flattering things, I was really cross for a little about having to fill in the neck with white and spoil the rose effect. I was going to the Beekmans', too, where I knew that I should see Ned. Suddenly it occurred to me to use fine pink tulle instead of white; and, gathered in lightly, leaving the tiniest of Vs front and back, it was extremely becoming—"though I say it myself as shouldn't."

Judge of my delight when Ned said the other day that he had been building barriers about his heart to defend it from me for some time, but that the evening at the Beekmans' "finished" him, adding—please believe that I am blushing, Lent—"It was not that you were a perfect vision of loveliness—you were always that in my thoughts, but

that veil thing over your neck seemed to proclaim you the most modest, womanly, refined ideal of girls, and there was nothing left of me that was not adoring you. By Jove, Kittens!—a girl should seem like one of those exquisite lilies, such as we see at Easter, just the incarnation of purity and sweetness, if she would occupy the shrine that a fellow keeps for the woman he hopes to have for his wife some day."

That is the sort of girl I dream of now, Lent, when I think of my blessed roly-poly baby-girl growing into maidenhood. Jimmineddy! how much higher our ideals are when we fit them on to those whom we love very tenderly! I think the best model a girl could follow would be her ideal of what she would wish her own daughter to be. One does not have to be a mother to know such

things. Every woman is a mother at heart.

Have you noticed that I wrote three whole pages without once mentioning Ned's name?

So remarkable a phenomenon could occur only because that young man is sitting at the table by my side, poring over some old law-papers that he had to bring home, lacking time enough at the office, and I thought the best way to secure him from interruption and me from temptation was for me to write to you.

I wanted to "talk back" after reading your letters to that silly girl who did not know how to appreciate them.

I lingered long over your second letter. Do you remember it? The one wherein you gave that dreadful picture of the girls' disgusting conduct toward

their matinée idol. It was revolting! and I wish every girl in the land could read that letter.

You don't think for a minute, I hope, dear, that your sister could have acted in the way you so graphically describe! I might have been on the outer fringe of the crowd, but never, oh never, any nearer—but to be seen there at all would have been a disgrace that your warning kept me from. Ned says that "when a woman throws herself at a man's feet one kind of male creature steps on her, using her as a pedestal for his vanity; the better sort of fellow is disgusted and pained that anything of the same sex as those whom he loves and honors should so cheapen herself."

He once knew a man who was pretty well acquainted with a popular actor, and the actor said that nearly every mail

brought him an effusion from some hysterical girl, adding, "I rarely read them. I hand them over to my wife—they amuse her—some of them would make you seasick!"

What a boon it would be if girls could occasionally know how men regard things, to see their conduct from a man's point of view—if the criticism could be kindly, and not directed too pointedly at their own particular foibles and follies at the moment that they are bent upon committing them—in short, if every girl could have a dear, fussy old brother Lent, just like mine!

Especially valuable would it be when a girl wants to find out about her men friends.

Only men are really competent to judge men, just as girls are the best judges of girls. If a girl is a favor-

ite with her own sex you may be sure she is the right sort.

What a service you did for dear Nell! Fancy such a splendid girl sacrificed for life to that cad!

Oh, how I laughed as I reread the letter which recalled my literary aspirations as a club-woman! I was so pleased with myself, and so in love with my fine phrases in the paper that I was to read before the august body of "The Tuesday Club."

I had been trembling in my boots at the prospect of facing all those women —and your letter just pricked the bubble of my vanity and I had no courage left, so my words of weighty wisdom were lost to the world!

As I was only a spectator after that, and had abandoned all idea of taking any active part, I was "at leisure from

myself" to observe the others. The whole business had not the true ring, Lent—there was no sincerity and simplicity in it. They all posed as being clever, and those who were really clever were too self-conscious.

These meteors had each a group of satellites—I'm afraid my astronomy is getting a little mixed, but never mind—who applauded everything they said, but there was more or less rivalry and jealousy. Somehow the clever ones were not liked so well as those who made no pretensions and were just kind and commonplace. For all were not kind: I heard a good many "catty" remarks, and I am glad that you saved me from their uncharity.

The "pose" deceived me at first. One woman read a paper on "Ideals" which opened like this: "You are all doubtless

familiar with Plato's immortal definition that the ideal is the archetypal essence of all things, subsumed under one concept" —and all around the room I saw self-satisfied smirks and glances interchanged. I felt so out of it. I could not even remember the first word of the "immortal definition," and taking my courage in both hands I asked the lady, when she had finished reading her paper, to repeat it to me. I wrote it down and learned it, or I could not quote it now to save my life!

I belong to a little club here, of six or eight women, who meet once a fortnight at the hour for afternoon tea at each other's houses.

There are no rules. We just agreed among ourselves that anything interesting or helpful that we have learned from our reading, experience or contact with

others we will share when we meet. Naturally it is a stimulus to read and observe.

We talk quite naturally of that which interests us, and welcomé more warmly anything that has to do with our babies, our housekeeping or home-making than we do any other helpful suggestion.

The best sign is that we grow more and more fond of each other and feel that we are forming lifelong friendships.

I bring home to Ned all that I have heard, and I am glad to have fresh material for his entertainment—or even his amusement — for he sometimes laughs at us a little in his dear, kindly way.

You would have laughed if you could have known the effect upon me of reading your letter about dancing this after-

noon. All your criticisms at first scarcely reached my consciousness, but the letter stirred delightful memories and roused the desire to dance, to feel my feet twinkling once more in time to that dear, delightful music! It was like the smell of powder to an old war-horse.

When Ned came in this evening the spell was still upon me and I just seized him and waltzed him around and around our wee parlor—to the accompaniment of his panting whistle and my dulcet tones, until we stopped for lack of breath.

He is such a dear—he fell in with my mood as readily as though not my wishes only but my very feelings animated his actions. It is the "little things all the time" that prove love and make happiness.

I think you are quite right about the

lack of grace in the manner of holding a partner that some men have; but lack of grace is not the worst thing. There are some men who hold one too tightly.

Mother told me that if dropping my hand down between my partner and myself, instead of placing it on the man's arm, was not a sufficient hint, I could be sure that his action was not from inadvertence—and I should stop dancing at once on some pretext so transparent as to show that it was a pretext and I was displeased. It never happened but once.

I think as you do about the two-step. It is a romp, not a dance. But, do you know, there are times when a girl feels as though she had springs in her heels and she wants to romp? But waltzing is the very poetry of motion. I scarcely remembered whom I was dancing with

—unless it was Ned, and he rarely went to dances.

Your letter spoke of the minuet. It is beautiful to watch, but it belongs to a more stately and more artificial time than ours, I am afraid. Still, why it is not revived I can't for the life of me imagine. I was reading about old dances recently—the pavane and the sarabande—and I learned to my surprise that it was customary for the cavalier to "salute" the lady upon leaving her by way of recognition for the pleasure exchanged; and certain stately dances were punctuated at intervals with such salutes, not only on the hand but on the cheek as well!

What kind of letters do you think the Lents of that period wrote to their sisters when the custom first came in?

It is true, what you said about not

meeting the nicest men at dances—the earnest fellows who mean to make their way to the top. The late hours *are* hard on them—and women are stupid not to adapt the hours of their entertainments to the needs and pleasures of those whom they are trying to please.

I used to get quite tired and sleepy and waste all the evening at home just waiting for the time to come to go to a dance. The "Cinderella" dance was a good idea.

The letter that really pleased me when I got it was the one about the kind of girls men really like. For, do you know that you sketched a portrait to the life of—guess who? Nell, and no mistake!

Did you "look into your heart and write," as young authors are told to do, fair sir?

Ah, if you and Nell could only over-

hear my prayers you might "learn something to your advantage," as the newspaper "personals" say—just a little suggestion that might set you thinking—you dear, stupid old Lent!

But to go back to generalities. It is true that girls *are* dense about the ways that please men. They must judge us from "straws," though it is not always fair. When a girl is considerate of a fellow's time, strength, and pocket, when she puts herself in real sympathy with him, his interests, aims, ambitions, is tender in speaking of the sorrows and misfortunes of others—it all tells, and is very "beguiling," as Ned says.

No really sensible girls mind going to the theatre in a street car. They do it every day, but they are thoughtless or feel awkward in suggesting it, fearing to imply to the young man that his

pocketbook is too light for even so small an expense.

Girls are often lots better than they seem. They are only silly and a little stupid. Love acts upon them like spring sunshine on the earth—all sorts of beautiful things appear.

I, being a married woman, while I have not yet forgotten how to be a girl and know how girls feel, and yet with the advantage of the confidential, disinterested advice and the point of view of two of the best and manliest men that God ever made—that's one for you, Lent!—I am going to use my influence to "coach" the girls of my acquaintance and tell them a few things that I have learned.

I feel now just as I do when I lift my chiffon veil and everything is clear to my eyes that was a little misty and un-

certain before. That is one effect that marriage seems to have. I think young married women might do a lot of good to the girls whom they know if they tried.

But oh, Lent, of all that precious batch of letters the last was the best! It was a beautiful letter, and I shall keep it as long as I live. Did Ned really mention my name sixty-nine times in his letter to you, and call me all those lovely things? I am so glad! It is nice to have them on record, and I am going to put that especial letter with those that Ned has written me. Is not that an honor?—and some day perhaps I shall read them to my daughter, when the right love comes into her life—bless her! Indeed, I shall keep *all* your letters and read them to her as a help in instilling

the right ideas and making her like the fair lily of her Daddy's ideal.

All that you say of Ned is perfectly true, and far, far more. For sheer lovableness he is unsurpassable. He is not just what I thought him—but thanks be to the Providence that watches over thoughtless girls' happiness, he is so much better, finer, nobler, everything! He has the caretaking, provident, purposeful, steady nature that my happy-go-lucky nature needs as a balance-wheel.

You say that Ned is not much to look at. I don't know what you mean by that. He certainly has the most expressive eyes I ever saw in my life—and don't you think he has a perfectly fascinating smile? I do. As for his nose, its very imperfection gives char-

acter to his face. I don't care for "handsome men"; they seem a bit womanish.

As for pecuniary matters — could mortal woman want anything lovelier than this wee cottage of ours! Every article in it has a pleasant history or suggestion. I have everything I want, and I just love to make every dollar do its full duty for Ned's sake and Baby's! Why, when I show him something that I have made over or bought at little expense, he thinks I am a perfect wonder. I would not exchange the approval I see in his eyes for a *carte blanche* order on Worth! The old proverb says, "Content is rich"; I am therefore fabulously wealthy, for I don't want any more. Of course, as time goes on I hope to add little touches here and there to the home

nest. Meantime I am "as happy as the day is long."

Next month, as you may know, father and mother are coming to make us a bit of a visit, and my head is full of pleasant plans and—Ned is through his work and I must stop No need to apologize—you always understand.

Good-by, dear, and God bless you!

Your truly loving

KITTENS.

ONE OF KITTENS'S LETTERS TO HER BROTHER.

ONE OF KITTENS'S LETTERS TO HER BROTHER,

In Which She Tells Her Brother How Ned Proposed to Her.

My Dear, Dear Lent:

WHAT will you think of your little sister? And yet you knew all the time where Ned's interest was. Everybody seems to have known except myself. I never thought it was *I* he cared for. How shall I tell you about it in any straight sort of fashion? My pen wants to hurry and tell everything all at once. What possessed me I don't know. We were alone in the library last evening when I finished my letter to you. Ned came in early in the evening and brought me a new magazine to read;

he has quite often come in when I am writing to you, but won't let me stop writing to entertain him.

Nell frequently brings her writing down to the library, too, and often we spend the whole evening in golden silence, we girls writing letters and Ned reading or sitting by the open fire.

Last evening father and mother were both away and I was alone. I got so interested in my letter to you that I nearly forgot Ned, who was not reading at all, but sitting in a comfortable chair by the fire, watching the cat, I supposed. I asked him if he wasn't, and he said, "No, it was Kittens he was looking at." Saucy boy, wasn't he, brother? Well, Lent, when I got my letter finished, just for the fun of the thing I carried it over to Ned and asked him if he didn't want to read it. I have read him parts of

your letters to me, and have once or twice let him read letters that I have written you. He took the letter and went over to the desk while I sat down by the fire.

I guess he must have read it through a dozen times—it took him a fearfully long time. He looked pretty sober once or twice when I looked at him, and then I began to get a bit scared and to wonder what sort of letter I had written, anyway. What made you ask me such a question, and why did I write you a letter about the kind of man I wanted to marry. Remember, Lent, you promised not to show that letter to any one. Think of my letting Ned read it! It was just one of my quick impulses when I didn't stop to think.

Oh, Lent, brother, I thought of all sorts of things while I was waiting for

him, and my heart was doing double-quick all the time. I wanted to run away, and I promised Kittens a good thumping when I got her upstairs alone. Ned has been so good to me and I have bothered him so often; honestly, Lent, I began to be most awfully ashamed of myself for letting him read that letter, and I even determined not to send it to you. Finally I couldn't stand things any longer, and went over to the desk and took the letter away from him and said with a laugh: "I didn't suppose it was so uninteresting as that; it has nearly put you to sleep. Do you suppose my letters have that same effect on Lent?"

He smiled a bit, but didn't answer me, so, of course, I had to keep talking to make up for what he didn't say. I have forgotten what I said or tried to

say, and, anyway, it didn't amount to much.

Then he turned off the light by the desk and we went over by the open fire and sat down.

I started to sit on a cushion on the floor in my usual comfortable and baby-ish fashion, but suddenly remembered that it wasn't company manners, and so got a rocking-chair. I tried to do some more talking, to fill in the silent places, but Ned wouldn't say anything, so finally I got quieted down, too.

"Shall we discuss your letter now," he said, "just as we have the other letters you have let me read?" Then, brother, I got contrary and said, "No, let's not talk anything about it. I don't believe I shall send it to Lent, anyway. I wish I hadn't let you see it."

He didn't say anything more about it,

and I went and got some marshmallows and began to toast some for him. There wasn't any special need of my toasting my cheeks any more, for they were red enough, and Ned only ate one marshmallow. But I felt so provoked with myself that I had to do something. You know Ned plans to go to New York tomorrow for a week's stay, and if the business he is undertaking is successful it may mean that he will live in New York for the next six months. So, you see, I supposed this would be his last call on us, and there I was making things so uncomfortable for us both and spoiling the whole evening! How did I know he was going to take the letter in such a sober, serious fashion—there, Lent! I got all out of patience with us both and was just ready to cry when he took some papers and envelopes from

his pocket and began looking them over. Then he handed one to me and said: "Does that look anything like the man you would like to marry?" At first I thought he was trying to jolly me, only his eyes didn't look that way, so I looked in the envelope and there was the dearest picture of himself: just a small one. But it is the nicest picture, looks me right in the eyes with the most honest, happy expression. I looked at it and then at him. "It is a dandy picture, Ned," I told him, and then, Lent, I just began to bawl! I hope you are ashamed enough of Kittens, but wait. Then I threw a cushion on the floor and sat down on it right beside Ned and just put my head on his knees and wept. Wasn't it awful? Lent, don't you ever, ever tell. And the worst is yet to come! I hardly gave him time to be scared or

to run away or anything else, though he did get his arms around me and forced me to look at him; then I stopped crying and said, "Kiss me, Ned, quick." Don't be ashamed of me, brother, please don't. I simply couldn't help it. He took me right into his arms and kissed me, and I knew that he had forgiven all the times I meant to tease and the times, too, when I hadn't meant to.

Oh, brother dear, I was so happy! I just hid my head on his shoulder and he held me close, till he whispered, "Please," and I wanted, oh, so badly, to look into his eyes again. They were so steady, honest and true. Lent, dear, I am simply deliriously, intoxicatingly happy. I didn't suppose love could be anything like this.

And just think of such a strong, honest, real man caring for your flighty

little sister. I rather guess she will have to begin to try to make herself worth while, won't she?

Ned is such a thorough gentleman; I don't mean a dandy or anything of that sort; he isn't forever picking up a girl's handkerchief and fussing around to see what he can do for us just as if he thought we were too helpless to do anything for ourselves, but I do think he has the finest courtesy and thoughtfulness for women; the real, old-fashioned kind, and I love him for it. He doesn't shine as some of the men do; Bert has beautiful eyes—he knows it, too, and knows how to use them—but Ned, dear boy, *his* eyes are just steady, quiet, honest and true. And they were more than that last night for me.

He has loved me more than a year; you knew all about it, and neither

mother nor the *pater* was a bit surprised. Mother has just been in and I jumped up and put my arms around her neck and said, "Mother, mother, mother, you knew about it all the time. Why didn't I know, too?" She just hugged me and told me that the love was there all the time, even if I didn't know it. I guess she is right. It seems to me now as if I had always loved Ned, and all the little things he has done for me take on a new meaning and are so precious. I always thought he was nice to me because I was your sister, and I supposed the reason why I tried to make things pleasant for him was because he was such a good friend of yours.

He does admire you so much, and we have had lots of good talks about the days when you were in college

together, and he is anticipating a happy six months in New York, where he can see you occasionally. Only, Lent, he said last night he wasn't going to stay there six months without me, and that he was thinking about my living in New York, too. Just think of that, brother! Supposing I should live in New York sometime where you could run in and see me every day—wouldn't it be fine!

You have been my dearest chum ever since we were wee tots, and we'll always be the same, brother dear, only Ned comes in, too; but that is different. Why, he is just everything, but you will always be the same chum that you have always been.

Brother dear, what do you suppose has bothered Ned all these months—well, there! he thought I only cared for

money and couldn't be persuaded to share his two thousand a year.

I was a bit hurt at first. I am glad, and I told him so, that I haven't got to be a rich man's wife. Of course, I am glad that the *pater* has money and all that, and I know, too, that lots of girls wouldn't think of marrying a man unless he had at least five thousand a year, but that isn't Kittens's way of thinking. I would rather begin with a small cottage and all that goes with it. I suppose I don't know much about doing without things, but one can learn, and with Ned to stand by me who cares what any one else says or thinks? Ned says you tried to make him believe that the state of his pocketbook would make no difference with me; thank you for that, brother. It doesn't.

Now, Lent, I want to tell you of one

of the nicest things that Ned has done for my sake.

Some months ago we were talking about smoking, Nell and Ned and I, and I said that I did not like to have a man smoke in my presence, for it gave me a sick headache, and that even the smell of a cigar anywhere about a man was repugnant to me. From some things he has said and by putting two and two together I am almost sure that Ned has not smoked a single cigar since that time. Only last week he and the *pater* were sitting on the piazza and the *pater* offered him a cigar, and he declined it. I happened to be going into the house, and I said to him: "And doesn't 'she' like smoking any better than I do?" There was a queer look in his eyes when he answered me, "Not a bit better."

When a man gives up a pleasure like that and without making a fuss about it either, what do you suppose a girl thinks of him? I told Ned last night what I thought, and he—well, he said some pretty nice things to me.

Oh, dear! how can I bear to let him go away tomorrow! He will be back in a week, but that seems such a long time. Perhaps it is a good thing that he is going and I shall have time to get my feelings straightened out a bit. I've just made Kittens stand before the looking-glass and promise herself that she won't kiss him before he goes, but there is such a naughty twinkle in her eyes that I almost know she won't keep her promise. Brother mine, you know I am not half good enough for Ned. I haven't promised to marry him—yet. When I do kiss him it will mean that I am giv-

ing him everything that a girl can give to the man she loves.

I am not all of the lovely things he says I am, and I am a bit afraid he will find it out and won't love me any more. But I am not much afraid, for I am very sure that your little sister has sole possession of his big, honest heart. Aren't you glad for her?

No one has yet seen the picture he brought me. He told me that the negative was broken, and only this one picture taken. So it is all mine. I shall show it to mother and father in a day or two, and when you come home next week you shall see it, but no one else ever shall. Isn't Kittens foolish! Never mind, she is happy. The *pater* and mother are so pleased in my joy. The *pater* gave me a big hug. As for mother, she has had a warm place in her

heart for Ned ever since you two were in college together. Nell shares my joy, although she looks a bit sober, and I know she is thinking about Bert.

I've often thought of the time when you would get married, Lent, and I should lose my chum and brother, and I didn't like the idea a bit. But now I just want you to be as happy as I am, and I shall be glad for the girl that you make as happy as Ned has made me.

But there! brother dear, I must stop. This is a long letter and I haven't half expressed my great gladness; I will tell you more when you come home next week.

Ned is coming up the street, and Kittens just has to run and meet him—and, well, never you mind! She's just

Your happy, happy sister,

KITTENS.

A MAN'S ANSWER TO A MAN

A MAN'S ANSWER TO A MAN.

By the Author of "Her Brother's Letters."

OF THE hundreds of letters that have come to me from men, as the result of the serial publication of the foregoing letters, this is the one I have chosen to answer. It is worth reading because it presents the subject clearly and yet with reserve:

"I cannot help wondering if there aren't some few things to be said for the young fellows who, like myself, may have been reared by good mothers, who deep in their hearts honor and respect a pure, sweet woman, who are not naturally bad, and yet who will sometimes allow the 'other side' of themselves to

gain the ascendency for a time. I know that the 'I'm-no-worse-than-other-fellows' argument sounds pitiably weak when brought forth as an excuse for such things, but the thought in the mind of a young fellow that all or 'most men do' has lots to do sometimes with his giving way, especially as he is apt to look rather lightly upon the reward of virtue when he sees many other men eschew any possible chance of such reward and yet seem to lose little or nothing of their standing in the world.

"In a recent novel by one of our foremost writers, one of the characters, a young man of the South, exceptionally clean-minded and of high ideals, is made to say, 'I'm not "innocent" in the least. You'll find we're all *men* here, just as much as any men in the North you could pick out.'

"In another novel, also by a prominent writer and a war correspondent as well, the hero, a virile, strong-headed chap who is pictured as every inch a man, is not, by his own confession, a whit more innocent, and this confession is made to the young girl he hopes to marry, and whom in the end he does make his wife.

"Do not all these things influence the average young fellow, whose instincts may be gentlemanly, in the belief that society is rather inclined as a whole to be tolerant toward the young man who is 'having his fling,' expecting it of him as a matter of course, and thinking none the worse of him for it?

"Isn't it true that a young man who mingles much with men and women, or reads our novels, will come in the course of time to see that virtue in a single man

is hardly expected? If the feminine half of our society demanded the same of a man that the men demand of them, would not the men as a rule meet the demand, and such a letter as yours not have the power to make so many of us smart?"

Of course, all this is merely saying that what a man can do, with a certain stretch of conscience, a woman can not and must not do.

It is the old, old idea that society condones in a man what it condemns in a woman. That is, in a sense, true: no one can gainsay it. That the law itself will, in a police "raid," dismiss the men with a reprimand the following morning and imprison the women is a spectacle that is constantly shown us in our newspapers. But is it fair? Is it what we know today

as the "square deal"? To me it is infernally unfair.

I am not one of those men who believe that what is called the "social evil" in our cities should be stamped out. I have traveled too much and seen too much of life from every point of view to hug such a delusion. But because such a social evil exists must I make myself part of it? Because there is a grogshop on the corner of the street where I live, and another on the corner of the street where I work, must I go into the one or the other? Because other men get drunk must I get drunk? Because I know where there is an opium-joint must I go and smoke the pipe? Because a social evil exists must I make it a personal condition in myself? Not at all. If society condones, or will condone, or blink at, or wink at, if you choose, some-

thing which my sense of fairness, of decency, of self-respect tells me is not square, is that any excuse for my doing it? If other men commit a wrong does that make it right for me to do it? What matters it to me what other men do? My conscience is mine: my self-respect is mine: my principles are my own—mine to guide *me,* ME. ME. Does it seem right, square, honest, to *me?* That is the only question there is for me to settle.

I do not say that there should be an equal social law for men and women alike. Although I believe it would be the only square thing, nevertheless I am not in the business of making laws for others. I have enough to do to square myself, and I can square myself only by believing, as I have always believed, that the same decent code of conduct

that applies to my sister applies to me, and I cannot see it in any other way. If other men see it in another light that is their affair. This is not living, perhaps, according to the spirit that I am my brother's keeper. But I see very little room in this life for theory: to me it is a living, burning "condition that confronts" me, and it is first and foremost up to me to keep my own life clean; not letting the other fellow shift for himself, no; helping him when I can, and giving him a lift when he needs it and when I can give it to him. But my rule has been first to see that my own doorstep is clean before I begin to bother about other people's doorsteps. And I have never seen a time yet when looking after my own doorstep hasn't kept me tolerably busy.

Of course, I know all that men say on

this question: the evasions they bring to ease their consciences, or to try to; the supposed human needs, and all that. This one fact, nevertheless, remains: of all the men I know, the best of them—I mean now the biggest of them—the men who are men, when we have talked as men will occasionally talk, have confided to me that they have never found any *valid* excuse for "having their fling." There are notions, of course, to the contrary, heaps of them. But never yet have I run these notions to the ground—and I have run a few of them down—without finding, in the last analysis, that they are notions and purely that, without a single solid foundation-stone to give them the slightest basis. It is not disrespect, but simply the common truth, to say that mistaken masculine notions can and do

find receptive soil in the medical mind as well as in the legal mind, or any other kind of mentality. That a man is a physician does not make him any the more fit to be my moral guide, except when I digress from morality to endanger my physical self. And it must, indeed, be a man of great medical understanding who could tell me, *and prove it*, that a decent life in a man is incompatible with his best and wisest human self.

Nor can I see the slightest common sense in the argument that a young fellow may lapse because it is "expected" of him, or that he will get no credit for abstaining if he doesn't. In the first place, it isn't "expected" of him. On the contrary, it is distinctly expected of him that he will lead a clean and decent life, and he should expect it of himself if no one else expects it. And as to getting

"credit" for it, men do not lead honorable lives for the sake of getting credit for it: for the sake of winning applause. They do it for themselves: for their own self-respect: for their own inner satisfaction, that they may be true to themselves and to the best that is within them. It is their very silence of decency that is often misconstrued into a veiled inference of indecency. The men who live lives as decent men's lives should be lived do not talk of the fact as an achievement: they live their lives and let it go at that. As a matter of fact, however, men do give a young fellow credit if he lives a decent life, and they know it far oftener than he thinks they do. Only they don't talk about it. To decent men decency is a thing that is taken for granted, and there is always an indefinable atmosphere, an unseen

bond, one might say, that draws a young man leading a decent life toward men who have lived as he is living. "Birds of a feather flock together" is as true of people of high principles as it is of the kind to whom the truism is more popularly applied.

Men who have a single standard of honor in their lives are far more numerous than the average young fellow generally supposes, and he need never share the delusion that if he lives a decent and clean life he will find himself apart from other men—except the men from whom it is always a distinction to be apart. A young fellow is always known by his true colors. That need never give him a moment's worry. Adherence to the very highest principles always reflects itself in a young fellow's life, and always counts with himself as well as with

others. For what is called "sowing wild oats" is nothing more or less than self-degradation to any young chap. That at twenty-five or thirty he has passed through a siege does not make him, or any man, one particle more of a man. What it does do is to make him just so much less of a man. It doesn't mean a broader view of life to have experienced certain phases of it: it means a dwarfing of his views. And he realizes this afterward. For the "life" that has had glitter for him in youth becomes a repellent remembrance to him as a man. The reputation and power that come of right living are what the man of from forty to seventy covets, and nothing but the well-spent years of early life can assure these.

I haven't put up impossible ideals in what I have said. For a man to live a

decent life isn't to live up in the clouds, or with his feet far from the earth, or to be a "ninny" or a "sissy." It is simply to be a man, nothing more or nothing less. And there are many thousands of chaps who can say, with honesty, what a friend of mine said at his wedding breakfast. He lifted a glass and drank a toast which gave a momentary shock to his bride and their guests, but behind which lay a significance unexpressed and yet understood by every man—big and fine and clear:

"Here's to the happiest years of my life,
Spent in the arms of another man's wife:
My mother!"

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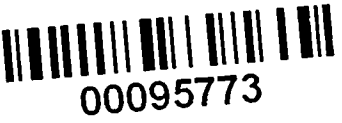

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